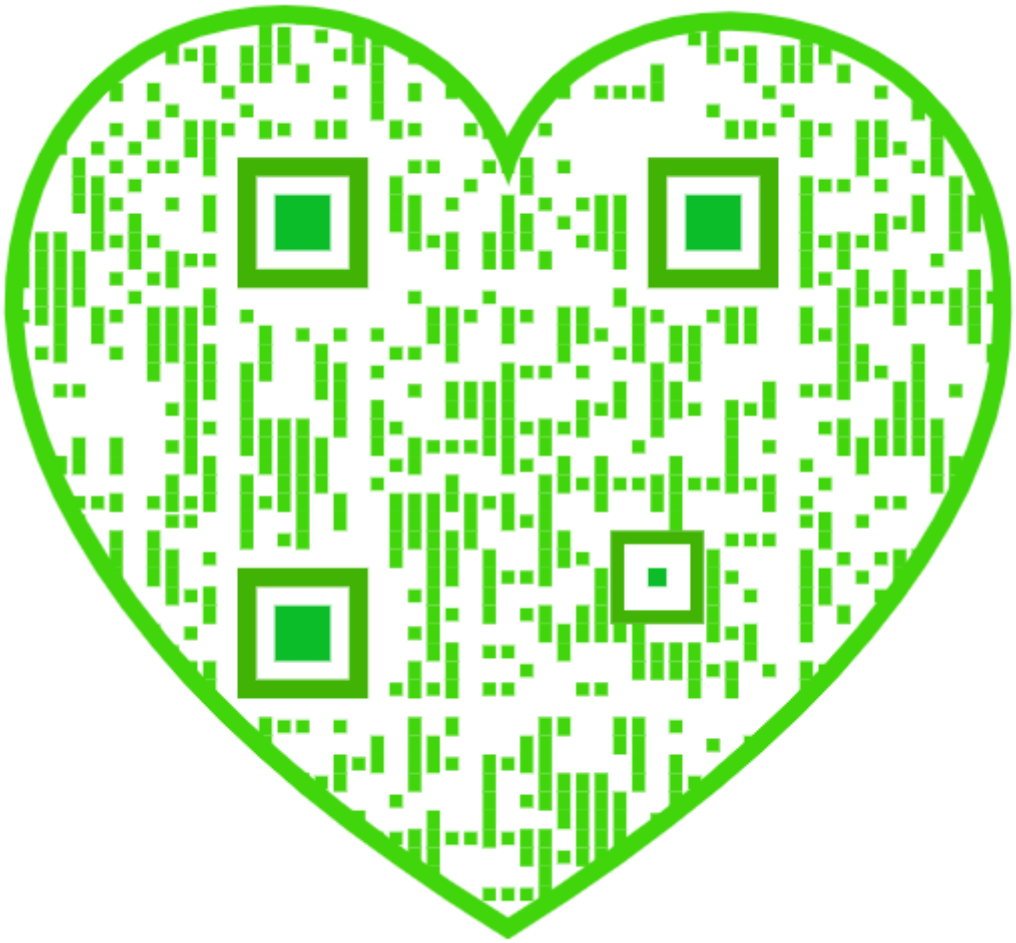
A BRIEF DISCOURSE ON WINE.



A

BRIEF DISCOURSE ON

WINE:

How to Choose it, and how to Use it.

LONDON:
WILLIAM STEVENS, PRINTER, 37, BELL YARD,
TEMPLE BAR.

A BRIEF

DISCOURSE ON WINE;

EMBRACING

AN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF

THE VINE,

Its Culture and Produce in all Countries,

ANCIENT AND MODERN.

DRAWN FROM THE BEST AUTHORITIES.

"I pr'ythee take the cork out of thy mouth,
That I may drink thy tidings."—*As You Like It.*

LONDON:
J. L. DENMAN, 65, FENCHURCH STREET.
MDCCCLXI.

191. k. 122.

" Then took a goatskin fill'd with precious wine,
Mellifluous, undecaying, and divine!
The gift of Maron of Evantheus' line,
(The priest of Phœbus at th' Ismaurian shrine),
Which, now some ages from his race conceal'd,
The hoary sire in gratitude reveal'd.
Such was the wine,—to quench whose fervent steam,
Scarce twenty measures from the living stream
To cool one cup sufficed: the goblet crown'd
Breath'd aromatic fragrancies around."

ODYSSEY, b. ix.

L'ENVOI.

THE policy of the British Government having by recent legislation been fairly directed towards measures tending to promote a large and early developement of increased consumption of foreign wines in this kingdom, a new era is opening for the daily use and enjoyment by all classes of that refreshing beverage. For generations past, high and prohibitive fiscal duties had served to exclude the lighter wines of Europe, and the people being thus limited to the knowledge of a few leading and expensive sorts, their taste and judgment were much contracted, if not perverted. Yet no production of the soil, perhaps, demands more uniform care and forethought than the grape, to make it yield in full perfection. Nor should this be matter of doubt or surprise when the many delicate circumstances which affect the health of the vine and the quality of the fruit are fairly considered. A single year of slovenly cultivation, an injudicious mode of training or pruning, an untimely season of frost, or rain, or blight may deteriorate for years the properties of any particular growth. Carelessness, too, in harvesting the fruit, negligence in the manipulations and subsequent process, imperfect fermentation, unskilful treatment of the must,

unclean casks or inadequate storeage, to say nothing of the frequent poverty and ignorance of the farmers themselves,—all tend to modify the strength and virtues of the product, and so multiply the sources of uncertainty, that uniform quality is not attainable even by cultivators of the highest repute.

To herald the emancipation of hilarious Bacchus from fiscal shackles of more than a century and a half's duration, neither senatorial eloquence nor sanguine anticipations were wanting, and England's parliament resounded with echoing sympathy and applause. It could not be gainsaid, that the substitution of a cheap and wholesome beverage would do more to wean an industrial people from confirmed habits of inebriety than all the custom-house restrictions or Maine liquor laws in the world. The expansion thus wisely inaugurated for the increase of commercial activity in wines, will doubtless promote the importation of vintages hitherto unavailable or unknown in this country; and as sound and timely suggestions in aid of a true appreciation and judicious selection for private use may be appropriate and serviceable at such a juncture, this slight attempt to elucidate succinctly and correctly some of the chief points connected with a subject of so much interest is respectfully proffered to an indulgent public.

LONDON, *December*, 1860.

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
SECTION 1.	Early Origin and Description of the Vine	1
„ 2.	The Vintages of the Antients	15
„ 3.	Ambrosial Nectar of the Antients: their gorgeous Cups and Festal Customs	22
„ 4.	Modern Wines: their Character and Qualities	29
„ 5.	Of the Wines of Portugal	44
„ 6.	„ Spain	56
„ 7.	„ France	63
„ 8.	„ Germany and Hungary	77
„ 9.	„ South Africa	88
„ 10.	„ Madeira and the Canaries	94
„ 11.	„ Italy and Greece	100
„ 12.	„ Persia and India	119
„ 13.	„ Columbia	126
„ 14.	On the Choice and Preservation of Wine	131

A BRIEF DISCOURSE ON

WINE:

How to Choose it, and how to Use it.

Early Origin & Description of the Vine.

THE invention of wine, like the origin of many other important arts, is enveloped in the obscurity of the remotest ages of the world; but in the history of ancient nations it has been commonly ascribed to those chiefs and heroes who contributed most to advance and civilize their respective countries, and to whom divine honours were often rendered in acknowledgment of the benefits which they had conferred on mankind. Without dwelling on the fabulous traditions handed down on the subject, it may be sufficient to observe, that the use of wine could not have remained long unknown to those portions of the globe where the vine freely grows. Bacchus, after his training by the Nysæan nymphs, is said to have traversed nearly the whole known world, introducing the culture of the grape, and diffusing refinement wherever he went.

During a long succession of ages, the art of wine-making was conducted on undefined and empirical rules, and the false notions of elementary philosophy rendered abortive all attempts to fix the theory on a sound and satisfactory basis. To Lavoisier must be accorded the merit of having first pointed out the true principles on which it is to be explained. The labours of his successors have confirmed his speculations, and the doctrine of fermentation has attained all the precision requisite for practical use. On so subtle and difficult a subject, indeed, an approximation to the truth is the most that can be expected: the primary cause of fermentation, as with other chemical agencies, will probably always remain a mystery; and we must rest satisfied with a knowledge of the principal conditions on which it depends, and by which the qualities of its products are mainly influenced.

The temperature most favourable to vinous fermentation appears to be 65° of Fahrenheit: below that degree it is languid; above, it becomes violent; and at a very high or very low temperature its action ceases altogether. The principal results of the fermentative process are the production of alcohol by the decomposition of the sugar, and the separation of the mucilage and extractive matter of the must in the form of lees. Whether any other important chemical changes take place, has not been perfectly ascertained; but as the wine has often a flavour totally different from the grape of which it was made, it may be assumed that some of the other constituents enter into new combinations, governed by the peculiarity of the fruit, and the particular mode of conducting the fermentation.

The general characteristics of the vine are familiar to every one. The fruit, differing in flavour, form, and size,

is mostly sweet, often luscious in taste; but there are varieties diminutive in size, and of a harsh and disagreeable flavour. The grape also differs very much in colour, from a rich violet to a jet black, or a white, green, or golden hue. The colour resides wholly in the skin, the pulp of every kind, save one variety, having the same internal tint. Although the general qualities of the plant are the same in all countries, the fruit it produces is greatly dependent upon external influences. Colour and size, form and taste, aroma and product, vary in so remarkable a manner, as might lead us to regard the vine as a peculiar gift of a bountiful Creator. The varieties of the plant are very numerous, and may be observed not only in grapes that are grown in different parts of the earth, but even in those growing in the same country, and raised on the same spot. A like difference, indeed, though less strongly marked, may be perceived in fruit of the same vine. Protect one cluster of grapes from too great exposure to the sun, and cover it with a bell of dark glass, or with oiled paper, and you will obtain a much higher-scented fruit in the former than in the latter. It is not, therefore, strange that the grapes which grow on the sunny side of Johannesberg, for instance, should be very superior, as far as flavour and fragrance are concerned, to those raised on the opposite side of the mountain, nor that, in general, a more piquant and stronger wine is produced in warm regions than in such as are cold or temperate. If we add to this that the peculiarity of soil, its constituents, the influx and drainage of water, the lightness or stiffness of the ground in which the roots spread, and further, that the dryness or humidity of the air, and the change or equality of temperature, exercise a sensible influence upon

the plant and its fruit, a general idea may be formed of the varied character of the juice that constitutes the principal element in this grateful product, upon the excellence and perfection of which the goodness of the wine mainly depends.

The vine is a hardy plant, and will grow so far north that it can do no more than blossom. It decreases in size with the decline of temperature, when cultivated in open vineyards. At the northern boundary of the vine region it is a stunted shrub; in the warm south it spreads from tree to tree with a luxuriance of vegetation proportioned to the more genial influence of the climate. The vines of Tuscany, or of Granada, and those of Coblentz, present a curious contrast, both in appearance and fruit. On the one, Nature bestows a prodigality of beneficent character; on the other, she seems to abandon her stinted offspring to man. The mountains of Ferdistan, in Persia, probably supplied the vines that were first ameliorated by culture. From Palestine or Asia Minor into the Greek islands the transition was natural, and from thence along the shores of the Mediterranean to the Straits of Hercules the progress was easy. It was cultivated in France before the time of the Cæsars—first, it is believed, at Marseilles,—and was introduced into Germany at a later period, the earliest vineyards being on the Rhine, in a cleared portion of the Black Forest. In some parts of England, in propitious seasons, the grape will ripen very well; but the uncertainty of its climate prevents any attempt at cultivation with a view to the wine-press. Ale and mead were served at the feasts of our Saxon ancestors, and wine was only an occasional luxury. The vine is said to have been introduced here prior to the year 1300; and, on the more reliable testimony of the

venerable Bede, we learn that by the commencement of the eighth century the culture of the vine had made some progress in Britain. There is, indeed, abundant evidence that vineyards did once exist in this country, and towards the middle of the twelfth century, as recorded by William of Malmesbury, extended over large districts, producing abundantly, especially in the vale of Gloucester. To all the greater abbeys vineyards were attached, and as these establishments were generally placed in fertile and well-sheltered valleys, the best spots for the vine might have been situate in their neighbourhood; but when it was found that the crop would not repay the grower more than one year in seven, the cultivation of course was neglected, and gradually abandoned.

Wine countries, it is true, generally support a numerous population; but even where aided by a more favourable soil and clime, poverty and squalor too commonly constitute their lot. It is only in the case of such vineyards as yield the choicest growths, and where the proprietors possess sufficient capital to enable them to store their wines till they acquire that excellence which time and judicious treatment alone can give, that this branch of culture becomes remunerative or reliable.

The vine will grow in any soil which is not infected by stagnant waters; but it flourishes most in that which is dry, light, and stony or sandy. Porous soils, particularly those that are chalky, produce the best wines,—fresh and light. Granitic soils, or those mingled with decomposed particles of that rock, also yield good wines. In Italy and Sicily the choicest plants grow among the rubbish of volcanoes. Three-fourths of all vines are planted on hilly ground, and wines of the highest class are made from such

as thrive among stone and loose pieces of rock, with little attention, save occasionally raking the ground around them. Rich, highly-dressed land has never produced wine of preferable quality. In districts where the summer is sufficiently long and warm, and the temperature throughout the year never sinks below a minimum of 50 degrees of Fahrenheit, the vine matures nothing but ripe and well-flavoured fruit; and when the bearing is exuberant, the quantity as well as quality is dependent entirely upon temperature. The grape that furnishes the most saccharine matter makes the best wine; no other property will compensate for a deficiency in sugar, on which also depends the proportion of alcohol formed. The colour of wine is manifestly derived from the skin of the grape, and the lighter or darker shades rest on the greater or smaller quantity of purple husks allowed in the process of fermentation.

The varieties of the vine are very numerous. Fourteen hundred sorts, from the provinces of France, once adorned the gardens of the Luxembourg, of which above a thousand appeared worthy of a particular description; and two hundred and fifty varieties are enumerated as cultivated in the kingdom of Andalusia alone. The quality of the grape is necessarily determined by the species of vine that produces it. Of some kinds the fruit is hard and rough; of others, it is sweet and mild: some varieties contain much saccharine matter; in others, the mucilaginous principle abounds. Nor can these distinctions be always ascertained by the taste; for two grapes may appear almost equally sweet, and yet on examination present very different constituents. Thus the ripe muscadine grape of Fuencaral was found to *yield 30 per* cent. of solid sugar, and the wine made from

it is very sweet and generous; but the *chasselas* of Fontainebleau, though an exquisite grape to the palate, affords very little sugar, and the wine it furnishes is dry and indifferent, for its sweetness proceeds not so much from the proper sugar of the grape, as from the superabundance of the mucoso-saccharine matter. Of all fruits the grape is, perhaps, the most susceptible of alteration in its nature from the properties of the soil where it grows, and to this cause the immense variety of the vine ought, probably, to be referred, rather than to normal differences in the species, or to the modes of culture to which they are subjected. When the vine is transplanted from a southern to a northern latitude, the quality of its fruit soon becomes impaired, but it improves when carried from a cold to a warm climate. In planting a vineyard, an indiscriminate mixture of varieties should be avoided, and the best sorts only selected. Independently of other differences, the red grapes ripen generally ten or twelve days sooner than the white, and it is of importance to keep them separate in cultivation.

The modes of planting, training, propping, and, more especially, of pruning the vine, which vary in different countries, greatly influence its produce. The fruit of high vines never ripens so well as such as are trained low, which receive the benefit of the reflected, as well as the direct solar rays, and of the warm exhalations that ascend from the earth. In those districts where the culture of the plant is best understood, it is seldom allowed to rise higher than two or three feet; and, in general, it may be taken as a maxim, that the nearer its branches approach the soil, provided there is no contact, the better will be the fruit produced. Where it is permitted to grow without check, it will ascend to the top of the highest trees, and distribute

its shoots in all directions; but the grapes so ripened will be proportionably inferior, and the wine made from them prove hard and austere,—for the greater the excess of fruit, the worse will be its quality.

The juice of the grape, as ascertained by chemical analysis, consists of the following principal ingredients; viz., a considerable portion of water and sugar, a quantity of mucilage, some tannin, acidulated tartrate of potash, tartrate of lime, phosphate of magnesia, muriate of soda, and sulphate of potash. Besides these, certain wines contain gallic acid, and in all wines a portion of malic acid, and some traces of citric acid may be perceived; but in the best wines the quantity is inconsiderable, and is generally in an inverse ratio to that of the saccharine principle, or alcohol. Some wines are distinguished by a high perfume and grateful aromatic flavour; others by their rough and astringent taste. In dry wines the saccharine matter has been entirely decomposed; in sweet wines a portion of the sugar remains in its original state. Quality must necessarily vary according to the nature of the seasons. In a cold year, the fruit will not attain its proper maturity, and be deficient in flavour and saccharine matter; hence the wine it yields will be comparatively weak and harsh, and liable to ropiness and acescency. When the season is rainy the produce will be increased, but it will be poor and insipid, and will generally contain an excess of malic acid, which imparts a peculiar flavour, always most perceptible in wines that generate but little alcohol. High winds and fogs are always injurious to the vine. In 1816 the grapes in many of the vine districts of central Europe were left ungathered from the badness of the weather, the fruit, to the month even of November, remaining rotten and neglected.

All wines are distinguished by a peculiar aroma or perfume, which constitutes one of their most valued properties. The odour, in many cases, differs from the flavour of the liquor, and is commonly more powerful in the weaker wines than in the strong. The chief product of the vinous fermentation is the alcohol, which may be separated from the wine in a pure state by the process of distillation. The strong wines of the south give the largest amount, especially those of Spain and Languedoc, which yield one-third of proof spirit. When young wine is thought to have attained a sufficient degree of maturity, it is freed from the lees by being racked into a clean cask. Though the liquor may possess no longer a saccharine taste, yet a portion of the sugar will generally be found to remain undecomposed; this will be acted upon by the extractive matter which still exists in solution, and a disengagement of carbonic acid gas, with a fresh deposit of sediment, will ensue. A portion of the colouring matter and tartar is precipitated, the liquor loses its harshness, and the odour and flavour that are peculiar to it become more apparent. By degrees these movements will be less perceptible; but in the stronger wines they will continue during many years, in the course of which they become much ameliorated. These changes may be accelerated by various artificial methods, especially by the agitation of the lees, which always retain a portion of fermentative matter, and by the assistance of heat. Hence we may comprehend the reason why certain strong and austere wines are so much improved and mellowed by being exported on the lees to a warm climate, while the lighter and more delicate kinds, making little deposit, are mostly injured by being made to undergo a similar process, or even by the

motion occasioned by their transfer to any considerable distance. In some points of view the acetous fermentation may be considered a continuance of the vinous. Both are dependent on the presence of the same leaven, and on a certain degree of heat, and both are accompanied by agitation of the fermenting mass, and by a considerable evolution of caloric. In the one case the component parts of the sugar enter into new combinations, and form carbonic acid and alcohol; while, in the other, they resume part of the oxygen which had been previously given out, and are changed into vinegar. If it be the object of the grower to obtain a dry and full-flavoured wine, he will gather the grapes as soon as they have acquired their proper maturity, and before they begin to shrink and wither on the stalk; or if he wish to have a very brisk wine, he may collect them before they are perfectly ripe; but if a sweet wine is desired, he will postpone the vintage to the latest moment.

There is no part of the vine which is not used for some useful purpose. In Switzerland the leaves are applied to medicinal or surgical uses. In cuts and green wounds they are esteemed a sovereign remedy. Decoctions of the juice of the leaves are used in poultices with great advantage. The leaves yield an agreeable tea, requiring more sugar than that of China: it is much drank, and thought to greatly strengthen the nerves. The prunings, well bruised and pressed, give excellent vinegar. The leaves and tendrils bruised, and the juice fermented, afford a pleasant light drink of a vinous character. The leaves form also excellent food for cattle when fodder is scarce, but they are of too much value in the vineyard to be often spared for the purpose. In such cases they should not be taken till they begin to fall off. They are then collected, put in

a dry place, and sometimes salted, pressed, and left to ferment. In some places they are alternated with layers of straw, and then form still more excellent fodder. After the vintage, animals are sometimes turned into the vineyards to browse upon the leaves. Vine branches furnish potash and salts when burned; basket-work is made from them; and the bark is used for bands to tie the vines to the props.

The must of the south is employed in making a rich confection with citron and aromatic sweets. The murk is greedily eaten by herbivorous animals: it is given dry, or mingled with other fodder. Fowls are remarkably fond of it. In some places it is given fresh from the vat to cows and mules, but in that state it intoxicates and injures them. After the vintage, it is customary with some growers to supply the dovecots freely with murk, the pips being eagerly sought after by the birds. Where fuel is scarce, the murk is often dried and burned, being laid up for winter use, like tan in some parts of England. When in a state of fermentation, it is useful as a bath for rheumatic limbs, by exciting perspiration. It is said to be a specific for the rickets, used in this way. Fractured limbs, placed for a longer or shorter time, as may be necessary, in a vessel of murk, whilst yet hot from fermentation, are said to consolidate more rapidly than by any other means. Even the pips or seeds of the grape are convertible to useful purposes, besides that of feeding pigeons. Separated from the murk by washing and carefully dried, they are ground in an oil-mill: the produce is very superior to that from nuts, either for eating or burning in lamps; no bad odour accompanies the use, and it burns as bright as olive oil, without any smoke. The murk macerated in water and distilled, yields brandy of a secondary quality.

A plant so useful, it can hardly be matter of surprise, has its superstitious appropriations. Not only do the leaves decorate the hair of the village girls in some of the southern wine districts, but the mode of plucking them under certain spells is thought to discover to the credulous lasses the truth or falsehood of their lovers.

The fifth decade of the present century will long be memorable, from the visitation of a destructive grape-disease, sufficiently remarkable for its extent, duration, and severity to form an epoch in the annals of the vine. It is rather a curious circumstance, that the origin of an epidemic which has wrought so much mischief and loss throughout the wine-growing countries of Europe, should be attributed to a locality where the vine may be said to be almost of artificial growth. The simple fact of the *oïdium* having been first observed on vines cultivated in hot-houses by Mr. Tucker, of Margate, in 1845, has induced many to suppose it was engendered by the high and humid temperature of the English conservatory; but the symptoms appear to have been detected on the banks of the Rhone by M. Dupuis, in 1834, and there is reason, moreover, for thinking that the oïdium is not a new form of disease, for there are documents extant in the archives of Spain, a century old, which describe a distemper that would seem, both in character and effect, to be identical with it. White efflorescences were first noticed, which covered the stem; the grapes were soon attacked, and hindered from swelling; the skin burst, and they quickly became rotten, and fell off. Great fears were at first entertained lest the malady should exercise a prejudicial influence on the public health; and many deaths from *severe* cholic, diarrhœa, and similar complaints having

been ascribed to it, the careful attention of botanical professors of chemistry were directed to an investigation of the seat and action of the disease, who ascertained that the white, dusty excrescence was a microscopic fungus belonging to the parasitical plants of the class *oidio*, and being of a new species was named *oïdium Tuckeri*. This fungus attacks the hinder parts of the vines, but rarely the stem. The leaves and tendrils also become more or less affected, the green colour becoming paler, and emitting an offensive smell. It was conjectured that the fungus was occasioned by the puncture of an insect, and its presence was actually detected in the seed of the grape, and on the reverse side of the leaf. The insect established itself on the leaves, and formed a sort of film resembling cobwebs, blistering the upper part of the leaf. Its birth is, however, thought to be subsequent to the invasion of the *oïdium*, and may be consequent on the altered state of the vegetable portions of the vine. From these well-ascertained facts it may be safely considered that this novel malady is a true botanical epidemic, like the cholera and other atmospheric visitations, the latent causes of which remain yet unsolved. It did not, however, prove in any way inimical to human life, and animals and birds, fed on the diseased grapes, seeds, and leaves, throve well, and continued quite healthy. Wine, too, though made from fruit in the worst state of distemper, produced no bad effects; but the vintages generally did not keep well, the stronger sorts, even, evincing an early disposition to acescency.

The *oïdium* first manifested itself in 1850, and taking its rise in the French department of the Seine, it rapidly extended its baneful course over the whole European continent, retaining for five succeeding years, with more or

less severity, its withering and ruinous sway. Numerous remedies were resorted to, but a dressing of sulphur was the only application that proved efficacious: it acted chemically on the fungus, suppressing and decomposing it in a few hours. The loss and suffering occasioned by the ravages of the grape-blight were intensely felt by incalculable numbers: in many districts the failure was complete; vines were uprooted, and fears were prevalent as to its permanent influence on the welfare of the grape. There are fair grounds, however, for believing that a recurrence of the malady would not be attended with the same extent of evil; and the one benefit to be gathered from the calamity seems to be a certainty, that, with the removal of defective and exhausted vines, the young plantations promise well for a vigorous and lasting renovation.

§ 2. *The Vintages of the Antients.*

THE antients bestowed much attention and care on the management of their vineyards, and were familiar with the most approved rules for the culture of the vine. They were aware how much the health of the plant and the qualities of the grape are liable to be affected by different soils and exposures, and were at great pains in choosing a proper situation for their vine-grounds. They condemned lands composed of stiff unctuous clay, or subject to much humidity, selecting such as were not too thin, but light and sufficiently porous to admit the requisite moisture, and allow a free expansion of the roots. The advantages of soils formed of a chalky or marly loam, or composed of rocky débris, were not overlooked; but the preference appears to have been given to the black crumbling soil of the Campania, which consisted of decomposed tufa. Of different exposures, a southern aspect was deemed the most favourable; and the superior flavour of wines grown on the sides of hills, compared with those raised on the plain, was universally recognised.

The varieties of the vine known in early ages were very numerous, among which a strong preference existed in favour of the Aminean, which is described by Pliny as surpassing all others in the richness and flavour of the grape. Next in excellence was ranked the Normentan, which, although still more prolific than the Aminean, seems to have contained an excess of mucilage, and so far suiting it better for the table. The Eugenian, Helveolan, Spionian, and several others, were also esteemed for their abundance, and the choice qualities of the wine which they

yielded. That no pains or expense was spared by the antients in procuring the best kinds for their vineyards is evidenced in the accounts which they give of the effects of their transplantation, and the system of management adopted in those days for preparing and dressing the vineyards; and the methods pursued in pruning, grafting, and tending the vines, are marked by equal skill and discernment. That their views were occasionally erroneous, may be readily imagined; but, considering the infancy of physical science at that period, they evidently possessed a very ample knowledge of the subject. Indeed, it may well be doubted whether any branch of agriculture has remained so stationary, or been so little influenced by the improvements of more recent times; for, throughout a great part of Europe, the ancient usages with respect to the treatment of the vine are still observed to prevail, and it is only in those countries where commerce has led to the extension of useful inventions, and furnished a stimulus to increased exertion, that better methods have prevailed. They well understood the processes necessary for giving to their wines a high degree of perfection, and were peculiarly curious in the means they employed for bringing them to a proper degree of maturity, and for preserving them during a long term of years. The application of the *fumarium*, or drying kiln, to the mellowing of wines was borrowed from the Asiatics, who exposed their wines to the heat of the sun on the tops of their houses, and afterwards deposited them in apartments warmed from below, to render them earlier fit for use. As the flues, by which the ancient dwellings were heated, were probably made to open into the fumarium, it is obvious that a steady temperature could be easily supplied, and that the vessels

would be fully exposed to the action of the smoke. Although this procedure may to our modern notions appear very questionable, yet it would not seem to differ much from that of a recent method of mellowing Madeira and other strong wines, by placing them in a hot-house, or in the vicinity of a kitchen fire or baker's oven, which is found to assist the developement of their flavour, and to bring them sooner to maturity. As the earthen vases which held the ancient wines were well defended by a thick coating of pitch or plaster, it is not likely that the smoke could penetrate and vitiate the genuine taste and odour of the liquor; but the warmth so maintained would have the required effect of softening the harshness of the stronger wines, and probably of dissipating excess in the potent aroma of the condiments with which they were impregnated. Accident is said to have led to the discovery of another method in their treatment. A slave, who had stolen part of the contents of a cask, resorted to the expedient of supplying the deficiency with sea-water, which, on investigation, was thought to have improved the flavour of the liquor; and thenceforth the practice of adding salt water to certain wines became common among the Greeks. For this purpose, the water was directed to be taken up as far as possible from the shore, and in a calm and clear day, to ensure its being of the requisite strength and purity, and then boiled down to about a third part before it was added to the wine.

At first sight it seems difficult to account for the expedients then resorted to, or how a predilection could exist for wines perfected by the addition of sea-water, or impregnated with the odour of pitch, rosin, and other resinous gums; nor can it be well imagined that their strong liquors could be rendered very exquisite by being exposed

to smoky garrets until reduced to a syrup, and rendered so muddy and thick as to require straining through a fine cloth in order to free them from impurities, or to be scraped from the sides of the vessels and dissolved in hot water, before they were fit to be swallowed. But when we consider the effects of habit, which soon reconciles the palate to the most disagreeable substances, and the influence of fashion and luxury, which leads us to prefer every thing that is costly or exclusive to articles of more intrinsic worth and moderate price, we may readily conceive that both Greeks and Romans might have excused their fondness for pitched and pickled wines on the same plea by which we justify our preference to beer, coffee, or tobacco. It was long ago observed by Plutarch, that certain dishes and liquors which at first appeared intolerable, came in time to be reckoned the most agreeable; and surely the charge of indulging a perverted taste in wine would proceed with an ill grace from a people, among whom a notorious partiality exists in favour of harsh and potent liquors, which long use has rendered palatable to their respective admirers. A more attentive examination of the facts, however, will probably satisfy us that these practices of the antients were by no means so injurious to the qualities of their liquors as, on a hasty view, we might be inclined to suspect. Many of the ingredients that entered into the composition of their condiments were designed to operate chiefly by way of clarifying or filtrating the liquors to which they were added. Others, again, would doubtless impart their own peculiar flavour, but then great caution was exercised lest it should become too predominant, and even this was often wholly or partially neutralized by age. When new, the antients condemned

such rosined and tainted beverage as much as ourselves, and it was only when their acrid qualities had become subdued that they were held in any degree of estimation.

The Roman vine grounds were very fertile, producing wine in great abundance: it was vended at very moderate prices, the cost of a gallon not exceeding fourpence of our money. The lighter red kinds were used for ordinary purposes, and would seldom keep longer than from one vintage to another. The stronger dark-coloured varieties, when long kept, underwent a species of decomposition, and by the precipitation of part of its extractive matter, and the pungency required from age, the genuine flavour of the vintage was fully developed, and all early roughness removed. From the mode, however, pursued by the antients, a greater or less inspissation of their wines took place; and this was most observable in the more generous kinds, the taste becoming disagreeably bitter, and the true flavour of the liquor obscured. Wine of a middle age was therefore to be preferred, as being the most wholesome and grateful; but in those days, even as in ours, it was the fashion to place the highest value on whatever was rarest, and an extravagant sum was often given for wines which were literally hardly drinkable. Such seems to have been the famous vintage in the consulship of L. Opimius Nepos, when, from the great heat of the summer, all the productions of the earth attained an uncommon degree of perfection. Pliny, who lived a couple of centuries afterwards, asserts that some of it still existed in his time, but reduced to the consistence of honey, and applicable only in small quantities for flavouring other wines, or mixing with water. Amphictyon is said to have issued a law, directing that pure wine should be merely tasted at the entertain-

ments of the Athenians; but that the guests should be allowed to drink freely of wine mixed with water. To take wine undiluted was held disreputable.

The wines in use among the Greeks bore a high reputation, the virtues and potency of which secured the praise and delight of Homer himself. It was in their luscious sweet wines that that people surpassed all other nations, and to this class the commendations of their later poets must be chiefly ascribed. They were, for the most part, the products of the Ionian and Ægean seas, where the cultivation of the vine was assiduously practised, and where a benignant climate and the choicest soils gave to its fruit an unusual degree of excellence. But besides these indigenous growths, the Greeks were familiar with the produce of the African and Asiatic vines, of which several enjoyed a distinguished reputation, and may be considered as the parent stocks from which their first vineyards were derived. Of these, the earliest of which we have any distinct account, is the Maronean, probably the production of the territory of that name on the coast of Thrace. It was a black, sweet wine, and from the evident delight with which the father of poetry enlarges on its virtues, we may presume it to have been of the choicest quality. He describes it as "rich, unadulterate, and fit drink for the gods," and as so potent, that it was usually mixed with twenty measures of water,—

> "And even then the beaker breathed abroad
> A scent celestial, which whoever smelt,
> No pleasure found it thenceforth to abstain."

Other parts of Thrace were famous for their wines, but Ismarus seemed to have longest maintained its credit. The Pramnian, a red, but not a sweet wine, and of equal

antiquity, was a strong, hard, astringent liquor, remarkably potent and durable, and was much commended for its medicinal properties. The Athenians, however, appear to have had little relish for a beverage of this character, and "abominated the harsh Pramnian wine," Aristophanes tells us, "which shrivelled the features, and obstructed the digestive organs." In the age of Pliny, the Pramnian was still a noted growth of the vicinity of Smyrna. Some of the Bithynian wines were of the choicest quality: the produce of Byblos, in Phœnicia, on the other hand, vied in fragrancy with the Lesbian; and the white wines of Mareotis and Tænia, in Lower Egypt, were of almost unrivalled excellence. The wine of Meröe, however, which was produced at the feast given to Cæsar by the voluptuous Cleopatra, appears to have surpassed all others in estimation, and to have borne some resemblance to the Falernian.

The sweet wines of the Greeks were principally of the luscious kind, like the produce of the present Cyprus or Constantia grapes, and they were accustomed to have their beverages cooled and iced in various ways. None of the more generous sorts were reckoned fit for use before the fifth year, and the majority of them were kept for a much longer period. The richer dessert-wines mostly in use among the Greeks were the Thasian and Lesbian,—among the Romans, the Cecuban, Albanian, and Falernian; and, after their knowledge of the produce of foreign countries, the Chian and Lesbian.

§ 3. *Ambrosial Nectar of the Antients: their gorgeous Cups and festal Customs.*

THAT the antients knew how to appreciate the properties of good wine, is clearly proved by the accounts left by Galen, Pliny, and others. Poets, philosophers, and historians have all joined in celebrating the virtues of wine, and they must, therefore, have been cognisant of it in its best and most refined state, which would seem to obtain further countenance from the well-worn legendary distich,—

> "Zeno, Plato, Aristotle,
> All were lovers of the bottle."

It is, moreover, highly improbable that Homer should have lauded the wine of his time as a "divine beverage," or that the Lesbian grape should have been praised for its delicious fragrancy, or Saprian wine extolled as emitting the odour of violets, hyacinths, and roses, and as filling the house with the perfume of nectar and ambrosia when first broached, unless these liquors had possessed qualities which rendered them as agreeable and fascinating to the senses as such panegyrics would imply.

As in all the more southern climates the grape attains its full maturity, and its juice abounds in the saccharine principle, a large proportion of the Greek and Asiatic wines may be presumed to have been of the sweet and strong kind. Homer seldom speaks of wine without using some phrase to denote its richness or its honeyed sweetness, and he frequently adopts significant compound words to give fuller effect to his description. The quality of sweetness, however, was by no means their sole criterion of excellence, for wines tempered by a certain degree of sharpness or

astringency were held in the highest estimation; indeed, several of the Greek dry wines possessed extraordinary rough and acrid properties, and only became drinkable when kept a number of years.

Of the Greek artists it may be truly affirmed that they embellished every thing which they touched. To the commonest utensils they gave, not only the most convenient forms, but a high degree of beauty, and it is from their pateræ, cups, and vases that the moderns have borrowed the happiest models for the appendages of their dinner-tables. Their inventive talents appear to have been constantly exercised in gratifying the taste for variety in drinking-vessels that prevailed among all ranks of the people, and who all sought to indulge according to their means,—the rich by forming large collections of cups on which the sculptor, lapidary, and jeweller had displayed the perfection of their skill; the poor by having their ivy and beechen bowls so curiously carved, that the beauty of the workmanship compensated for the meanness of the materials. Athens claimed the invention, and took the lead in the manufacture of porcelain vases; but the potteries of Samos soon rose into equal repute, and with those of Saguntum, in Spain, and two or three other towns in Italy, furnished the chief supply. Formed of the purest clay, they were celebrated for their extraordinary lightness, and were sometimes imbued with aromatic substances that imparted a grateful perfume to the liquor drank from them. The Egyptians, too, were long justly famed for their works in glass: they could give it all the clearness of rock-crystal, and were conversant with the art of gilding and staining it of various colours. The Alexandrians, in particular, are said to have brought the manufacture to such perfection, that they could

imitate in that material every sort of porcelain ware; and it was from the banks of the Nile that the Romans were supplied with wine-glasses, of which the use had become very general in the capital. Such, however, as affected much state despised what had become so cheap, and drank only from cups of gold, which, at the entertainments of the great, were frequently presented to the friends or guests whom the masters of the feast delighted to honour.

The Greeks, though a highly polished people, and living in a temperate climate, are commonly reproached with their love of wine; and their parties of pleasure have been stigmatized by some writers as little else than mere drinking bouts. But the charge must be received with considerable reservation. They were acquainted with the culture of the vine from a very early period; their soil was exceedingly propitious to its growth, and luxury had made great progress among them at a time when the manners of the Romans retained much of their primitive simplicity. Hence their older writers make more frequent mention of their convivial excesses, and more particular allusions to the wines which they drank, than are to be found in the contemporary authors of Rome. Yet although they may have often violated the laws of temperance, they were studious to preserve a certain degree of decorum in their feasts, and seldom gave in to such gross debauches as disgraced the Roman name under the emperors. When they drank freely, their wine was much diluted: to use it otherwise was held to be a proof of barbarism. To drink even equal parts of wine and water was thought to be unsafe; and the dilution was frequently more considerable, varying, according to individual taste and judgment, from one part of wine and four of water, to two of wine and four, or else five

parts of water, which last seems to have been the favourite standard. From Homer's statement of the dilution of the Maronean wine with twenty measures of water, and other similar authorities, some have inferred that these wines possessed a degree of strength far surpassing any of the liquors of modern times, or of which we can well form an idea; but it should be remembered that the wines in question were not only inspissated, but also highly impregnated with various aromatic ingredients, and had often contracted a repulsive bitterness from age, that rendered them unfit for use till they were lowered with a large quantity of water. If they had equalled the purest alcohol in strength, the above reduction must have been more than enough; but the strong heterogeneous taste they had acquired would render further dilution desirable, and, in truth, they may be said to have been used principally for the purpose of giving a flavour to the water.

At the banquets of heroic times each guest had a separate cup; and larger cups and purer wine were presented to the chiefs, or those friends whom the master of the feast wished to distinguish. It was also a mark of respect to keep their cups always replenished, that they might drink as freely and frequently as they desired. At the conclusion of the repast, pure wine was handed round; but before it was tasted, a portion of it was poured on the floor or table, as an oblation to Jupiter and the gods; and the cup was always filled to the brim, as it was held disrespectful to offer anything in sacrifice but what was full and perfect. Hence the goblets were said to be crowned with wine. When the richer wines were circulated, it was usual for the master of the feast to begin the round by pledging the principal parties; that is, he tasted the wine and saluted

the company, or the guest on his right hand if a person of distinction, to whom the cup was then passed, and who was expected to finish its contents. To drink in this manner was considered a proof of friendship, and the cup so presented was termed a bumper glass.* It was also a common practice at the convivial meetings of both nations to drink to the healths of eminent individuals, and to the absent friends and mistresses of the persons present; and the respect or attachment entertained for those so toasted, was supposed to be indicated by the greater or less number of cups which the proposer filled out to their honour. The guests were further served with garlands, or roses and other flowers in season, which they wore, not only on their heads, but sometimes also about their necks and arms. The appropriate number for select occasions was considered, according to Varro, to be not fewer than three, or more than nine, as expressive of the number of the Graces or the Muses. They wanted for no manner of diversion whilst at dinner, having ordinarily music and antique dances, and, at earlier periods, combats of gladiators. Some idea may be formed of the magnitude of their public entertainments from the statement of Plutarch, that Julius Cæsar once, in a treat which he gave to the people, provided no less than 22,000 dinner couches, each accommodating three persons.

A comparison instituted between the forms and usages of these early times and the recognised customs of the present day would reveal numerous coincidences. The arrange-

* The word *bumper*, which has sadly puzzled etymologists, is merely a slight corruption of the old French phrase *bon per*, signifying a boon companion. To drink a cup of good fellowship, or bumper-health, may therefore be regarded as strictly synonymous with the Grecian equivalent phrase.

ments of our dinners, the succession and composition of the different courses, the manner of filling our glasses, of pledging our friends, and of drinking particular healths are all evidently descended from the Greeks and Romans; and although certain peculiarities in our locality and habits may have rendered the practice of bumper-cups and undiluted liquors more frequent than commendable, yet the ordinary distribution of wines at our feasts cannot be considered as differing greatly from that here mentioned. Exception, however, must be made of one striking contrast that existed between the customs of the two nations: the Romans allowed their women to be present at their festive meetings, but forbad them the use of wine; while the Greeks permitted them to drink wine, but excluded them from all entertainments at which any but near relatives were present. In more primitive times, however, the females of the family occasionally appeared, performing the office of cup-bearers, and other table services.

During the early periods of the republic it is doubtful whether the Romans were much accustomed to the use of wine, for the constant predatory warfare with neighbouring states in which they were involved, must have prevented them from giving that attention to vine-culture indispensable for bringing the produce to any degree of perfection. Yet few parts of Italy proved unfriendly to the vine, and it flourished most in that portion of the coast to which, from its extraordinary fertility and delightful climate, the name of Campania Felix was given. The exuberant produce of the rich and inexhaustible soil of the whole of this district has called forth the eulogies of every writer who has had occasion to mention it. "The Campania," says Florus, "is the most beautiful region, not only of Italy, but of

the whole globe. Nothing can surpass the mildness of its climate, for it is blessed with a double spring; nothing can exceed the fecundity of its soil,—hence the contest between Ceres and Bacchus for its possession. Here are the vine-covered hills of Gaurus, Falernus, Massicus, and, above all, Vesuvius, the rival, as it were, of the Ætnean fires."

From this district the Romans obtained those vintages which they valued so highly, and of which the fame extended to all parts of the world. No wine has ever acquired such extensive celebrity as the Falernian, or more truly merited the appellation of "immortal" conferred upon it. At least, of all ancient wines it is the one most generally known in modern times; for while other eminent growths are overlooked or forgotten, few classic readers will be found who have not learned something of the Falernian, and its fame must descend to the latest ages along with the works of the mighty masters of the lyre who have sung its praises. But although the name is thus familiar to most, few attempts have been made to determine its exact nature and properties; and little more is understood concerning it than that the antients valued it highly, kept it until it became very old, and produced it only when they wished to regale their dearest friends. All writers, however, agree in describing the Falernian wine as very strong and durable, and so rough in its early state, that it could not be drank with pleasure, requiring to be stored a great number of years before it was sufficiently mellow. Horace even terms it a "fiery" wine, and calls for water from the spring to moderate its strength; and Persius applies to it the epithet "indomitum," in allusion to its heady quality. The excellence of this wine is probably mainly due to the loose volcanic soil on which it was produced.

§ 4. *Modern Wines: their Character and Qualities.*

THERE can be no question that the characteristic varieties of taste and odour originate chiefly from the peculiarities of the soil where wines are grown, for they continue more or less distinct in the produce of particular localities, notwithstanding great differences in the shelter for the vine and the warmth of the seasons; but it is equally certain that the latter circumstance has also a considerable influence on these qualities, which are, indeed, of so delicate and inconstant a nature, that they may be said to vary from year to year, there being hardly two vintages, though collected from the same spot, and managed with the same care, that will be found completely identical in flavour and perfume. That a vine is a vine, and a vineyard a plantation of vines, no one will dispute; but although the plant be the same, there may be veins of different soil, and a vineyard with different aspects,—inequalities from which it would be unreasonable to expect that all its fruit should be of equal quality. If a soil be of sand or chalk, or both, a dry wine will be the product, (as in Xeres); if schistous, richness will result, (as in the Alto-Douro); and if deep clay, an earthy and watery flavour is certain, (as in Figuera wines). The plant and the soil over a whole estate may be the same, yet with varying aspects the wine of one part may be mellow and delicious, and in the other acrid and immature. It is evident, moreover, that quality must always be affected by every change of condition in which the fermentation of the juice takes place. They are obscured by the use of bad methods; they are often eclipsed by the injurious admixtures to which wine is frequently subjected after it is made.

Though in describing wines it is not unusual to speak of

the "flavour of the fruit," yet none of the red class can properly be said to retain the taste and aroma of the grapes from which they are made, whilst white muscadine wines, in whatever soils they may be grown, always partake more or less of the innate quality of the fruit. This is particularly observable in the produce of the Frontignan vine. To discriminate correctly between the minuter differences and qualities of varying samples is a faculty possessed by few. The difference of taste among individuals is proverbial, and the difficulty of a clear definition in words is greatly augmented by the poverty of our language to express in suitable terms their chief distinctions and minuter shades of quality. The French have terms for distinguishing the several properties characteristic of their wines, some of which cannot be translated; but the words "delicate" or "fine," as applied to the wines of Champagne, the peculiar "aroma" that remains on the palate after tasting them, together with the "bouquet," which is understood alone of the perfume and applying to the sense of smell, are terms pretty intelligible to Englishmen who are partakers of French wines. It is not improbable that much of this diversity proceeds from the way in which the palate has been exercised: thus strong liquors blunt its sensibility, and disqualify it for the perception of the more delicate flavours of the lighter wines. A person accustomed only to bad wines will often form a very erroneous estimate of the better growths, and sometimes even give the preference to the former.

All wines possess what is called the vinous flavour, emanating from the alcohol which they contain, and modified in the different varieties according to the proportions in which that ingredient is combined with the aqueous, acid, saline, mucilaginous, and aromatic principles. In

good wine none of these should predominate, but the whole ought to form a perfect compound, having its distinct and peculiar flavour, which should be full and entire, not cloying on the palate, or leaving any strange or unpleasant after-taste. In the production of certain wines, however, we are sometimes obliged to forego this kind of excellence, in order to obtain other peculiar properties. The virtues of the brisk wines of Champagne, for example, reside in the carbonic acid gas, which in a great measure escapes when the pressure is withdrawn by which it was retained in union with the water and the mucilage, carrying along with it much of the alcohol and aroma. The grateful properties of sweet wines, on the other hand, depend on the abundance of saccharine matter that remains undecomposed; and the vinous attributes of some of the Burgundy sorts are sacrificed, in order to preserve the great bouquet for which they are justly admired.

White wines may be regarded, in some points of view, as more perfect than red wines,—at least they appear to contain fewer elements of decomposition. The strong red wines, which are fermented with the hulls, and often with the stalks of the grapes, do not attain their highest perfection until after they have deposited a considerable portion of their tartar and colouring matter; but the lighter wines are generally in perfection before this change occurs, for when they lose colour, they speedily alter and pass into a vapid state. White wines, on the contrary, even when of inferior quality, will remain much longer unchanged, probably because they contain less mucilaginous and extractive matter, and when well fermented, may be preserved for an indefinite length of time. Usually, however, they yield to the red in respect of flavour and perfume. The *fine* wines

are distinguishable from the *ordinary* by their character, aroma, and body; they always improve by long keeping; but many of the *secondary* sorts, with due care and management, will retain their qualities unimpaired for a considerable period. The *common* wines constitute the lowest class, and are seldom known beyond the limits of the district where they are produced. Weak wines, which generally contain an excess of mucilage, are the most liable to spoil; they often turn acid and ropy, and end in becoming vapid and worthless.

That the wines of France formed the chief beverage of the wealthier orders in England from the fourteenth to the first half of the eighteenth century, is fully established by the testimony of historians, as well as by official documents. When the laudable attempts, already mentioned, to naturalize the culture of the vine in this country succumbed to the unpropitious influences of a humid and variable climate, the community were entirely dependent for their supplies on the product of neighbouring and more genial states; and certainly, whilst good foreign wine was procurable at moderate prices, little advantage could accrue from a desire to supplant its use by costly native growths, for of all annual crops that of the vine is the most precarious. If the grape will not always ripen even in Champagne, it must be absurd to expect it to thrive in an atmosphere so inconstant as that of Britain, and any futile diversion of our cereal lands into vineyards would be a shallow endeavour to reverse the obvious designs of nature: in many provinces of France, even, the vine does little more than repay its cost of cultivation. In Normandy and Picardy, where the heat of the summer is greater than in England, the culture of the vine has been gradually relinquished, and all the renewed at-

tempts to establish vineyards in this country, although they appeared to succeed for a time, have ultimately failed.

During the fourteenth century the English were mainly dependent upon Gascony for the supply of clarets and other lighter wines; and during the long reign of Edward III. various laws were enacted for the regulation of commerce with that province, which had already reached some magnitude. By the 5th of Richard II. it is directed that the best wines of Gascony, Osey, Spain, and the Rhine shall be sold for 100 shillings, and the best Rochelle at 6 marks the tun; and by retail, the former at sixpence, the latter at fourpence the gallon. In 1381 the price is stated to have risen considerably; but in the year 1387, if we may credit Hollinshed, there was such abundance of wine, that "it was sold for 13*s.* 4*d.* the tun, and for 20 shillings the best and choicest." The money-value of claret north of the Tweed in 1493, is ascertained from entries in the trade-ledger of a Scotch merchant of that period, named Andrew Haliburton, who resided at Middleburgh, and attended the fairs of Berri, Bruges, and Antwerp. Professor Innes, in his *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, describes it as by far the oldest merchant's book that has been preserved in that part of the kingdom, and, with other curious mercantile particulars, he quotes the following items:—"A certain 'Andro Mowbray younger' exported cloth and large quantities of skins, and got in return awms of Rhine wine, and tuns of Gascon claret, (the latter cost £4 the tun,) with 2 butts of Malwissy, bought from Jan Breganden for £12." "The Archdeacon of St. Andrews sent occasionally wool and hides, with barrels of pickled salmon and trout, receiving in exchange, besides other foreign articles, puncheons of wine,—claret costing 16 shillings the puncheon."

A subsequent statute of 7 Edward VI., called an "Act to avoyde Excesse of Wines," besides other provisions for the regulation of prices, contains various enactments for controlling their sale in a manner that had never before been attempted, and amongst them the following curious clauses: 1. "None but such as can spend one hundred marks of yearly rent, or is worth one thousand marks, or else shall be the son of a duke, marquis, earl, viscount, or baron of the realm, shall have or keep in his house any vessel of foreign wine for his family's use exceeding ten gallons, under a penalty of ten pounds for every such offence."— 2. "Merchants may use in their own houses, but not sell, such wines as they shall import: also high sheriffs, magistrates, and the inhabitants of fortified towns may keep vessels of wine for their own consumption only." In addition, no taverns were permitted to be set up for the retailing of wine, save in towns or cities; and then only two to be allowed, except in London and some other places, with a limitation of the number for each. The English, however, were now too much accustomed to wine to be restrained by any sumptuary laws from indulging their taste for that luxury. Of the large quantity consumed at that period, some idea may be formed from the expenditure for wine at great entertainments, and the liberality exercised in the houses of the nobility. At the enthronization of the Archbishop of York, in the sixth year of Edward IV., one hundred tuns of wine were drunk. His predecessor is said to have used eighty tuns of claret yearly in his house; and the consumption of wine in the establishment of the Earl of Shrewsbury exceeded two tuns in the month. In the Earl of Northumberland's household, however, which was regulated with the utmost economy, the yearly allowance

of wine did not exceed forty-two hogsheads. The historical accounts given of the mode of living in the time of Queen Elizabeth show, not only the great abundance, but the extraordinary variety of foreign wines then in use.

The national use and taste of a people for wines may be said to be progressive with its civilization; and such has been the influence of custom in reconciling the palate to certain tastes, however incongruous, that wines were sometimes rendered more vendible by having qualities imparted to them which in themselves are repulsive. We are apt to question the refinement of the antients, who could relish the factitious bitterness given to the produce of their vines by means of pitch, rosin, and salt-water, and yet are pleased with the acerbity and astringency which modern wines occasionally receive from the infusion of various harsh ingredients, ignoring and disdaining the combination of sweet and odoriferous herbs with which they scented and improved their inferior wines. In this country it was not unusual, at the above period, to mix honey and spices with the wines, in order to cover the harshness and acidity common to most of them. Thus compounded, they passed under the generic name of *piments*, probably because they were originally prepared by the *pigmentarii*, or apothecaries, and they were used much in the same manner as the liqueurs of modern times. The poets of the thirteenth century never speak of them but with rapture, and as an exquisite luxury. They esteemed it as the master-piece of art to be able to combine, in one liquor, the strength and flavour of wine with the sweetness of honey and the perfume of the most costly aromatics. A banquet at which no piment was served would have been thought paltry, and deficient in the most coveted essential. The varieties of piment most frequently men-

tioned are the *hippocras* and *clarry*. The former was made with either white or red wine, in which different aromatic ingredients were infused, and took its name from the particular bag called 'Hippocrates' sleeve,' through which it was strained. There is a curious recipe still extant, that gives directions how "to make ypocrass *for lords*,—with gynger, synamon, and graynes, sugour, and turesoll; and *for comyn pepull*, gynger, canell, longe pepper, and claryffyed-hony." It was taken, at all great entertainments, between the courses, or at the conclusion of the repast, and wafers and manchets are directed to be served with it. *Clarry*, on the other hand, was a claret or mixed wine, mingled with honey, and seasoned much in the same way. It is repeatedly named by our early poets, and appears to have been drunk by many fasting, or as a composing-draught before retiring to rest.

Of these medicated liqueurs two kinds only continue still in use; one being *Vermuth*, or wormwood wine, which is prepared in Hungary and some parts of Italy, and greatly valued as a gentle and agreeable tonic, free from any tendency to acescency; and the other a compound made by infusing one or more toasted Seville oranges in some light wine, and then sweetening to the taste with sugar. This preparation, when made with Burgundy or Bordeaux wine, is called *bishop;* when old Rhine wine is used, it receives the name of *cardinal;* and when Tokay is employed, it rejoices in the dignified appellation of *pope*. The prevailing taste for sweet wines soon led to the importation of all the choicest kinds; they seem to have been used in considerable quantities, attended in the sixteenth century by a progressive augmentation of price. Malmsey, which in 1492 fetched only twopence a quart, sold for twice that

sum in 1550; and three years afterwards it rose to fivepence, notwithstanding a law of Edward VI. had once more fixed it at threepence. It long continued the favourite wine, and is the only one of the sweet class specified in the ordinances of the household of Henry VIII., in whose reign, however, the much-belauded sack was first imported into this country. Its precise character and properties have long been the subject of diligent inquiry and much controversy; and considering how familiar our ancestors were with wines of this class, and what a large space they occupy in the writings of our best authors, it is not a little singular that their history and identity should have so long remained in obscurity, and that the question should continue still undecided.

"Wine, boy!
Wine o' my worship! Sack! Canary sack!"—*Old Play.*

Sack, probably, was first used as a generic name for white wines: occasionally the particular growth was specified, but for a long time the words sack and sherry appear to have been used indiscriminately for each other. Some have supposed that sack is derived from *saco*, — *ódre* or *borracho*, in which wine is carried; but the Spaniards do not apply *saco* to wine-skins. In Spanish dictionaries of a century and a half old, sack is given as *vino de Canarias*. Markham writes, "Your best sacks are of Xeres in Spain; your smaller of Gallicia and Portugal; and your strong sacks are of the islands of Canary and of Malligo." The Malaga sacks must have been not only stronger, but much sweeter than the other kinds, as by mixing them with Sherry a liquor resembling Canary wine was produced. It would thus seem that the term sack was applied equally to the sweet and dry wines of Canary, Xeres, and Malaga, which

may serve to explain much of the confusion and diversity of opinion prevalent as to the true character of the wines so much extolled by our earlier playwrights and poets. The practice that existed of mixing sugar with sack has been thought by many persons to indicate a dry wine, such as Rhenish or Sherry; but there would be little humour in Falstaff's well-known jest on sack and sugar, if the liquor had not been of the sweet kind. Many authorities can be quoted that appear to warrant the inference that sack was a dry Spanish wine; but, on the other hand, numerous instances occur in which it is mentioned in conjunction with wines of the richer class. The Act of Henry VIII. speaks of "sakkes or other sweete wines;" and we read in *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, "Give me a cup of sack,—an ocean of sweet sack." We also find mention of Canary sack, which differed materially from Sherry in character, and could not come within the description of a dry wine. In the early voyages to the Canaries, quoted by Hakluyt in 1598, there occurs this passage: "Nicols lived eight years in the islands. The isle of Teneriffe produces three sorts of wine,—Canary, Malvasia, and Verdona, which may all go under the denomination of *sack*." The term is here meant to apply equally to the sweet and dry wines of Canary, Xeres, or Malaga.

The sack drank at gentlemen's tables is described in passages of the older drama as a mixture of sherry, cider, and sugar; those adding more who did not think their's sweet enough. And we learn from a treatise by Venner, *temp.* 1620, that "sacke, taken by itself, is very hot and penetrative: being taken with sugar, the heat is somewhat allayed, and the penetrative quality thereof also retarded." Whatever may have been the exact nature of sack, it proved

highly attractive and seductive to the gallants of that day. Herrick calls it a "frantic liquor," and revels with delight on its "witching beauties," "generous blood," &c.; and most of the dramatic writings of the age contain frequent allusions to its enlivening, and other fascinating virtues. Falstaff, too, whilst descanting on its excellent effects on the body and mind, says, that "A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it: it ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish, and dull, and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, inventive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which, delivered o'er to the voice (the tongue), which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is,—the warming of the blood; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice; but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme. It illumineth the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom (man) to arms, and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain,—their heart; who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage, —and this valour comes of sherris: So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning a mere hoard of gold, kept by a devil till sack commences it, and sets it in act and use. . . . . If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them should be,—to forswear thin potations, and addict themselves to sack."

"Give me sacke,—old sacke, boys,
To make the Muses merry;
The life of mirth, and the joy of the earth,
Is a cup of good old sherry." —*Pasquil.*

In the *Mystery of Vintners*, published in 1692, is given a recipe "to correct the ranknesse and eagernesse of wines, as Sack and Malago, or other sweete wines;" whether the Canary islands furnished any dry as well as sweet wines may be questioned; but it is clear that Canary sack resembled the liquor which still passes under that name. Sugar was customarily taken with Rhenish, and various other white wines. Judging, then, from what is observable of the wines of Spain, it is probable that many of them in those days were both dry and sweet, acquiring from age alone the dryness for which they were distinguished; and it may be fairly inferred, that the sack our merry Falstaff loved was rich, luscious, and "penetrative."

In 1667 the price, as fixed at Oxford, was "Sack and Malagaes one shilling and sixpence the quart, and no more." In 1673, however, by the same authority, it was advanced to one shilling and tenpence the quart.

It is somewhat noteworthy that at this period, and for a long time afterwards, most wines were retailed from the wood. An Act of 1638 even prohibits the sale of wine in bottles, and directs it to be supplied in future in just measures only,—an injudicious enactment, as the lighter wines, when in draft, cannot by any art be preserved sound in the cask above a certain number of weeks. But this may help to explain the origin of the complaints concerning the frequent adulteration of wine attributed to the vintners, as well as the object of the numerous receipts for "mending and restoring" wines met with in old writers.

It is a curious and remarkable fact,—owing, possibly, to the restrictive operation of heavy fiscal imposts,—that the consumption of wine in this country has not kept pace with the progress of population, whilst the demand for spirits

has extended enormously. As the relish for ardent spirit increases, the preference for wine seems to diminish; and, certainly, if the juice of the grape is not replete with all that gives it the first place in human luxuries,—if the aroma, the bouquet, and piquancy of the genuine liquor are neither prized nor wanted, and heavy, dull intoxication and prostration of the faculties thought preferable to a pleasing cheerfulness and the draught which sustains and enlivens without injury or overwrought excitement, it would be extravagant and irrational to waste money on the products of foreign climes. Wine, however, has been ever the solace and delight of admiring nations, even from the days of the Flood, and it could be scarcely imagined that more was not consumed in Great Britain when the population amounted to sixteen millions, than when it was only ten. Verily, the deficiency cannot be attributed to the badness of the times, for England in the interim has grown still more rapidly in material wealth, than she has multiplied in numbers.

From 1780 to 1859 the consumption of British-made spirits increased from 873,840 to 24,253,403 gallons; and it is a painful fact, that inebriety in this country has expanded with a diminution of the use of wine, morals as well as health suffering by the augmented resort to ardent spirit.

An inquiry into the influence of wine on national or individual character opens a wide and interesting field of disquisition; but the absence of accurate data, and the difficulty of separating and distinguishing them from various attendant or special circumstances, would probably prevent the deduction of any satisfactory or consistent theory on the subject. It is consoling, however, to witness the gradual progress of society towards rational and refined enjoyments. .A generation has hardly passed away since

it was no uncommon thing to see men of high intellectual acquirements, and of irreproachable character in every other respect, protracting the nightly feast, till not only their cares but their senses were completely drowned in wine. At present such irrational excess would operate as an effectual barrier to all polite society. Some authors, it is true, have not hesitated to affirm that in wine countries the character of the people is commonly analogous to the beverages they produce; but it must be acknowledged that the natives are much less prone to intemperance than those nations for whom the attraction of vinous liquors seems to increase in proportion as they recede from the climates that produce them. Although, when taken without restraint, wine can only be considered as "a delightful poison," as the Persians have appropriately termed it, yet, like other poisons, when used with moderation and discretion, it is capable of producing the most beneficial effects. "Temperately enjoyed," writes an eminent authority, "it acts as a cordial and stimulant,—quickening the action of the heart, diffusing an agreeable warmth over the body, promoting the different secretions, communicating a sense of increased muscular force, exalting the nervous energy, and banishing all unpleasant feelings from the mind. In general, then, we may conclude that the good effects of wine as an article of diet are referrible to its stimulating operation on the nervous and muscular coats of the stomach, by which means that organ is incited to greater action, and the flow of gastric juice healthily promoted. This tendency will, of course, vary according to the proportion of the spirituous and aromatic constituents, and the quantities of the acids and neutral salts by which their action, within certain limits, may be controlled or modified."

To most persons of great mental activity there is commonly a tendency to an irritable condition of the nervous system, in which the smallest and most common-place matter magnifies itself into undue importance, becomes a worry and a care, and genuine repose and tranquillity are banished by an access of perturbations of feeling almost beyond the capacity of the sufferer to restrain. "The proverbs of all tongues," remarks Dr. Chambers, "show how work purely mental exhausts the body; how, for instance, not only the painful emotions, care, sorrow, anxiety, but the nobler impulses, the afflatus of the poet, the ambition of the patriot, the fixed attention of the scholar, the abstraction of the lover, fret to dust their tenement of clay." Now it is consoling to reflect that there exists a power capable of relieving this morbid condition, and of keeping in check the tendency to it. Universal experience teaches us that alcohol, used moderately, tea, and tobacco, alike exert a potent *calmative* influence on these oppressive irritabilities, —an influence which seems precisely in harmony with the teachings of science in regard to their physiological action; and it rests with each individual to choose which is most suitable to himself, provided that he has self-command enough to keep within the limits which sound judgment prescribes.

§ 4. *Of the Wines of Portugal.*

PORTUGAL, as well from its geographical position as from propitious local circumstances, appears destined by nature for the developement and perfection of the vine. This natural superiority, however, has been sadly marred by the indolence and ignorance of the cultivators, for the produce might have been vastly increased and still more improved, and ordinary wines attained to a higher character, if the farmers, obeying certain fixed and well-known laws, had studied the mode of tillage most suitable for the soil and the peculiar requirements of the plant, and adopted a better method of fabricating the wine. In many provinces of Portugal the vine is planted indiscriminately on hill and plain, and allowed to shoot up to a considerable height. No less than 67 varieties of vine are reckoned as grown in that country, but a baneful practice prevails of mingling the products without distinction of colour or quality, which is fatal alike to personal emulation and to perfection of produce. "Everywhere throughout the country," says a native author, "a blind and uncertain practice is followed: every body is the slave of custom: there is no fixed principle to direct or guide their operations." *Custom* is an answer for every thing, and there are many districts where bad wine is made from good grapes, without there being any possibility of convincing the vintagers that much better liquor might be produced with much less trouble. The farmers do as did their forefathers before them, disdaining the counsels of scientific men, censuring those who recommend timely innovations, and more especially rejecting the suggestions of such as were most likely to be beneficial to

them. In the immediate vicinity of Lisbon, however, and along the course of the Douro, the culture of the plant is better understood, more care and method is observed in the vintages, and it is from these localities that the supply which comes to this country is derived. The vines here are in general kept low, and trained on poles; at Beira the high growth prevails, and there, too, they mingle brandy with the wines. The best wine exported to England is produced near Pezo da Rego, situate in the centre of the Alto-Douro, and at that place the annual wine fair is held.

The fertile wine-district of the Alto or Upper Douro commences about fifty miles from the harbour of Oporto. It presents a succession of hills that afford the choicest exposures, and such loose and friable soils as have been shown to be most suitable to the growth of the vine,—the powerful sun of the south rendering a failure of the crop a matter of rarity. The harvest, consequently, is usually luxuriant, the grape rich and abundant. Soil, climate, and fertility, however, were alike lost upon the sloth, ignorance, and superstition of a hard-faring and untractable people. Wine in large quantities was made in a very defective manner, but it satisfied the wants of the home consumer, and this being the main object of the proprietor, he became careless of improvement. Produce of an unnecessarily inferior character was the inevitable result, and the wines of Oporto seemed destined long to remain unnoticed.

But external events were effecting for Portugal, what Portugal was unwilling or incapable of doing for itself. A jealous rivalry and national animosity had long dominated the councils of England and France, which gradually increasing in asperity, they began to oppress each other's industry by fiscal regulations and prohibitions, that finally

led to open hostilities. The sympathy and support uniformly accorded to the Stuart family by the court of Versailles, and the intrigues of Louis XIV. in Spain, further contributed to induce the British government to cultivate a closer amity with Portugal, and one important political result was the Methuen commercial treaty of 1703. By the provisions of this celebrated compact the Portugal wines were to be admitted into this country at a customs duty one third less than that assessed on the vintage of any other country. The impolicy of such a measure will not now be denied. Its immediate tendency was, to check the introduction of cheaper if not better wines; to promote the importation of supplies under the name of Port from places other than Oporto; to stimulate the practice of admixture and adulteration both at home and abroad; and finally to erect for itself a giant monopoly, fraught with baneful and suicidal results, prejudicial alike to quality, purity, and price,—the exports of later years, by their inferior character, serving to throw additional discredit upon all shipments bearing the name of Port.

Since the commencement of the last century, the political relations of England and Portugal have rendered us extremely familiar with the wines of that country, and obtained for them a degree of favour and importance which, under other circumstances, they might not have so easily acquired. Prior to the Revolution of 1688 the wines of French origin constituted three-fifths of the entire consumption of this country, the imports extending at times to 40,000 pipes per annum. From that remarkable era these large shipments began rapidly to decline: in 1701 they fell to 4000 pipes, and at the end of the first seven years from the Methuen treaty, the average annual supply was 330

pipes only. As few persons in those days kept much store of wine in private cellars, and the chief consumption was in taverns, where it was served from the cask, the whole quantity in the country at any one time was not very considerable, and prices fluctuated with every cause that affected our foreign trade. On the war that followed with France, in 1689, Claret became scarce, and in the course of a year or two the stock in hand was completely exhausted. As the growths of the Bordelais were in great request, an appropriate substitute for them became a pressing necessity, and the deficiency was supplied by the red wine of Portugal, which appears to have been then imported for the first time. This is daintily illustrated in the *Farewell to Wine*, temp. 1693, by the following tavern dialogue :—

"Some Claret, boy!"
"Indeed, sir, we have none.
Claret, sir? Lord! there's not a drop in town.
But we have the best red Port."
"What's that you call
Red Port?"
"A wine, sir, comes from Portugal.
I'll fetch a pint, sir." * * *
"Ah! how it smells! Methinks a real pain
Is by its odour thrown upon my brain.
I've tasted it: 'tis spiritless and flat,
And has as many different tastes,
As can be found in compound pastes."

The poet Prior, too, indulges in an occasional fling at the novel beverage, as in the couplet,—

"And, in a cottage or a court,
Drink fine Champagne or *muddled Port.*"

Notwithstanding a strong popular reluctance and distaste, the differential duties in favour of Portugal soon

worked wonders. By 1720 this fiscal arrangement had conferred an advantage over the produce of other states equal to £24 per pipe, and thus compelled, in a manner, to resort to the banks of the Douro, there is little need to seek for other reasons why Port now forms the standard of English preference and use. It was not their intrinsic qualities that first brought these growths into notice, but because they were comparatively low in price. Englishmen, however, are strongly wedded to old habits: numbers believe Port to be the only real wine in the world, and shiver whenever Hock or Claret is named. The people have become seasoned to it, have long been trained and accustomed to its use, and it is not very likely to fall into discredit here for some generations to come.

Prior to the year 1715, the Portuguese were considered to be ignorant of the art of preparing wines for exportation. When first introduced into this country, the Oporto wines were received in a pure state; but about this time the custom commenced of mingling brandy with the shipments for English use, and to such an extent, that in later imports no less than from 16 to 18 gallons of spirit per pipe was infused, and that often of execrable quality. By this objectionable process a great additional outlay is involved, and the prime cost doubled or trebled to those who can afford the luxury of reducing such wines, in some twenty years, to the state to which they would probably have been brought earlier by a diligent application of the recognised principles of fermentation. Whether this ardent ingredient was originally added with the view of enabling them to bear sea-carriage, or merely to pander to a supposed defective palate, is of little importance to determine. In this country, however, it has become an article of belief,

not only that the quality of these wines is much improved by the admixture, but that they will not even keep any length of time without it. Habituated as we now are to their use, improvement in this respect is greatly to be desired, and doubtless will some day be effected.

Towards the middle of the last century the admixtures and adulterations commonly practised had become so glaring and universal, as to cause a serious diminution in the demand, and so low had they fallen in price, that in 1752-3 a pipe of the then Oporto wine was to be bought for £2. 16*s*. The failure and distress naturally attendant on a sudden revulsion and stagnation of trade was severely felt, and under the influence of public clamour and discontent the Government was induced to authorize the formation of a joint-stock company for the superintendence and protection of the culture and commerce of their staple product. In 1756 a monopoly of the Upper Douro was granted to the Oporto Wine Company, the regulations and powers of their charter being ample for the suppression of the pernicious practices common both in cultivation and treatment. Had the company done its duty, and eradicated the evils so long and notoriously prevalent, the wine of Oporto, naturally of a high character, would have further improved; but if the manner in which it exercised the authority delegated to it be looked into, we shall find it not only grossly betraying its trust, but exhibiting all the odious features of a rigid and protected monopoly; and so baneful and continuous have been their abuses of power, as repeatedly to call forth the censures of the ablest writers of their own country. The narrow and mercenary system they pursued has borne its natural fruit in high prices, low quality, and short supplies. The abundance on the banks of the Douro,

and the capabilities of the country for unlimited extension, were unquestionable; yet by arbitrary restrictions, and notwithstanding the advantage of a ready and exclusive market, exceptional duties, and an increasing population both in wealth and numbers, the imports here were actually less in the five years 1818-22, than for a corresponding term so far back as 1731. At that period, too, the cost was under £8 per pipe; in 1818 the price at Oporto was £48, with no certainty even then that the wine retained its primitive qualities or most perfect state. It was not an increasing demand from the pleased or satisfied consumer, but the mercantile management and control that caused this excessive increase of price. The effects of more recent legislation will doubtless rectify the evils inflicted by an unwise and grasping policy, and the interests of the community will be permanently advanced. It is evident that heretofore justice has not been done to the wines of the Douro, nor have their true character been fairly developed. Let the cultivators be free, let care and delicacy be observed in the vintages, and there need be no fear of a prosperous result.

The correspondence with Her Majesty's Government of the British Consul at Oporto, October 1850, gives much curious and interesting information connected with this long-standing grievance, and from this reliable source we transfer the following particulars, taken from statements remarkable for their intelligence and lucidity. Referring to the system that then prevailed in the conduct of the wine-trade, he bears testimony to the fact that highly objectionable regulations were officially sanctioned by the Portuguese Executive to enhance the cost of the Douro wines to the English consumer, without any adequate mea-

sures for preventing "the exportation to Great Britain of any but the best quality;" all kinds of wine, of the first, second, or third class being, in fact, constantly shipped to this country as freely as to any other part of the world. A decree of the 29th May, 1850, ordered that the duty on all wines of the "first quality," to whatever country exported, shall be the same; but wine of the "second quality" may still be sent to places out of Europe as before. Now, writes the Consul, on Port wines of the "second quality" the export duty is only sixpence a-pipe; but wine for any place in Europe must be nominally of the "first quality," and on such the export duty is £3. 9*s*. 7*d*. per pipe. In both cases it is requisite that the wine should be accompanied from the stores to its shipment by an official certificate, granted for wine of the quality the exporter states it to be; but whether it is identical with that for which the certificate was obtained, or even wine of the same kind, no inspector or authority at any time inquires. For wines intended for consignment to an European port, if not placed in the first class by the official tasters, passes must be purchased. These are procurable only from holders of wine nominally of the "first quality," but unsaleable as such, the cost of which sometimes exceeds £5 a-pipe. The English merchant, therefore, has to pay £8 or £9 per pipe more than the very same wine would cost a New York or Brazilian shipper,—a most important difference, especially when the wines are new, or low in price. The amount of export duty raised on first quality wine is about £84,000 a-year, more than nine-tenths being contributed by the English importer; of which the Oporto Wine Company receives annually £34,300, in consideration of its obligation to purchase yearly from the farmers a certain quantity of

wines of the second and third qualities, none of which, under either denomination, can be exported to England. These fiscal regulations, although ostensibly so intended, are not conducive to the benefit of trade, as testified by the Commercial Association of Oporto, who, when consulted by the Portuguese government, described "the practice as barbarous; that wines of the second class were as good as those of the first class; and that the denominations 'second and third quality' were a gross deception, and injurious alike to the farmer and the merchant." The effect has been an artificial scarcity of wine exportable to England, and therefore an undue enhancement of the market value, the advantage being reaped chiefly by the wine company, which, although its own exports were inconsiderable, obtained by this operation a monopoly of the wine used for home consumption, without sustaining the cultivator or benefiting the consumer.

The character and classification of the several wines is determined by public officers, twelve in number, appointed for that duty. In conformity with the law, the trials of wine last seven hours a-day; and for no less than six hours at a time these diligent employés are occupied in tasting wine of every description produced in the district under survey. Sweet wine and dry, with or without brandy, light, full, pure, or mixed with colouring or sweetening matter, are all tasted by them promiscuously, each officer deciding on seldom less than 150, and sometimes even as many as 300 samples in the six hours. Under so delusive an examination it would be impossible, if the wines were to be classed according to their purity, soundness, and fine flavour, for the decision of the tasters to be right except by accident: what would be most likely to attract their ap-

proval would be such as were extremely full and strong, whilst the light, and more delicate and finely flavoured wines would probably be rated low, or rejected altogether. Some time after the trial, the Government determines for how much wine of the "first quality" certificates shall be issued to qualify it for exportation as such,—all the remainder being ranked as wine of the "second quality." This decision, however, seems to depend more upon the representation of the company as to the stock of wine at Oporto, than on the goodness or abundance of the vintage.

The maker of inferior wines, remarks the Consul in conclusion, must profit largely by regulations which encourage, if they do not compel, the owners of good vineyards to infuse brandy and colouring matter. That the wines of the Upper Douro, if well fermented and carefully made, need more than a very small addition of ardent spirit is exceedingly doubtful. Certainly, good wines sent to the Brazils keep, notwithstanding the length of the voyage and the high temperature to which they are exposed, with about half as much spirit as those for England, and it is probable that even a considerable portion of this smaller quantity is unnecessary. To produce the brandy used in the wines imported yearly into England, more than 30,000 pipes of wine are distilled; and on this brandy, if charged as spirits, the duty would be not less than £400,000 a-year. Doubtless, it is highly advantageous for Portugal to be able to sell so large a quantity of her produce to this country, but it is not a little surprising that any artificial regulations should be permitted, which, without conceding the British importers any privilege or equivalent, burthen their wines with duties on exportation amounting to more than £78,000 per annum, and yet further charges, in benefit of

the vintager, for produce that does not find its way to this country at all, equal to £50,000 a-year more,—to say nothing of the arbitrary restrictions on quantity, enforced with a view to the enhancement of price. The royal decree of May 1850 does not place British and American traders on an equal footing,—wines of the first quality, and a very large portion ranked in the second class, differing only in name. All that it accomplishes is, to enable exporters to ship wine for places out of Europe as wine certified of the first quality on payment of the high export duty, or as wine but of second quality, paying only sixpence a-pipe, as they may think fit.

Such were some of the abuses arising from baneful regulations and inane supervision, intended for the gain of the few at the expense of the many, that called loudly for inquiry and rectification through the potent influence of the advanced intelligence and enlightened commercial policy of later times. Narrow restrictions, pernicious monopoly and extortion, were permitted to trammel the vine cultivation of the Alto-Douro, conducive of artificial quality, artificial scarcity, and factitious prices for the British market. These evils will no longer be tolerated. The enlarged views of the English government with respect to its fiscal imposts on wine, will re-act with considerable stringency on its commercial relations with Portugal. The prosperity of that country depends on her vintages, and liberal measures for greater freedom of mercantile intercourse have already been propounded in her legislature. The Douro yields wines of various excellence, whilst the produce of the provinces of Traz os Montes, Beira, and Minho, hitherto confined to local use, can compete with the lighter vintages of France; and the time,

probably, is not far distant when the Portuguese wine-trade will be vastly and profitably amplified.

The chief white sorts known to us are the Lisbon, a useful sweet wine, possessing considerable body; Bucellas, a well-known table variety, the produce of the Hock grape transplanted to Lisbon; and Carcavellos, a sweet wine of a muscatel flavour, grown in the same vicinity. Setuval, in Estramadura, also produces a white muscadine of good esteem. Lisbon and the adjoining territories supply red wines of excellent quality, and in great abundance. The growths of Lamego, Torres Vedras, and Monçaon, the latter of high local celebrity, are described as sufficient for the supply of a kingdom.

The grape-blight first made its appearance on the Portuguese vines in 1853, and appears to have reached its climax in 1856–7. The effects of the distemper in this region was deplorable: hardly any of the white varieties escaped, and a serious blow was struck at the national prosperity. It annihilated the most choice and expensive Portugal wine, reduced the annual crop to one quarter of an average, and impaired the character of the remnant,—lessening the value of the exports and its reputation in the chief markets, which current deterioration of quality and enhancement of price will take some time to repair.

§ 5. *The Wines of Spain.*

THE wines of the Spanish peninsula rank deservedly high in the estimation of the first connoisseurs in wine, not only in England, but all over the world. Blessed with a benignant climate, the richest growths, and abundant produce, Spain has long occupied a prominent place among the wine countries of Europe. If France lays claim to the first honours in this respect, it is because science has led the way to excellence, and yielded to delicate manipulation that which nature had well nigh accorded to Spain without such appliances. With every disadvantage of the indolent and injudicious process in manufacture they pursue, there are in Spain both red and white wines of surpassing excellence. Of red, perhaps the Spaniards can hardly boast of many that can rival the more delicate growths and perfect bouquet of other localities, but in the production of dry white, and certain kinds of sweet wine, they stand unequalled, and the trade in them extends to every part of the globe.

The wines of Spain are grown on a soil highly congenial to the culture of the vine, for the most part calcareous, of which carbonate of lime forms two-thirds, and often three-fourths. The sun ripens the grape without those hazards from chill and humidity to which, in a more northern clime, the vintage is constantly liable. Hence the crop rarely fails, though in the southern parts of the kingdom the summer heat is so intense, that they are obliged to frequently irrigate the vines. From north to south, sites, soils, and aspects of the happiest kind cover the face of the country. The vineyards are principally on slopes and

declivities, and the grapes are left to hang until they begin to shrivel in the sun. For making Sherry, red and white grapes are used indiscriminately: the several varieties are produced by the different modes of treatment. Pale Sherry is made from the same grape as the brown, the different shades of colour being all caused by mingling them with *vins cuits*, or boiled wines.

The best white wines are grown at Xeres de la Frontera, near Cadiz, and the adjoining territories. Their manufacture is conducted by the agents or principals of foreign houses, who reside in the locality, and to this may be attributed the main cause of the marked improvement of later years. The high prices demanded for good Sherries will hardly be thought unreasonable, when the care and attention given to the growth and the various local and fiscal charges are taken into the account. The white and sweet varieties are those chiefly known to foreigners; but the red wines, properly treated, would equal most others in goodness. The *vins du pays* consumed by the natives are not the white, rich wines, nor the dry Xeres, but very excellent red wines, though they are too often deteriorated by the carelessness observed in their manufacture. Those grown far in the interior are generally kept in skins, as being easier of carriage. From this cause they are often so tainted with the pitchy taste and the odour of the undressed skin, as to be hardly drinkable by a foreigner at all. The wines of Spain generally, both red and white, are of full body and much intrinsic worth, and will one day rank much higher in public estimation than formerly. The use of them in England is fast surpassing that of the Portuguese, and when the political and social condition of the country shall have changed for the better, and the means and facility of

transit enlarged, it will be seen that Spain, with her sunny climate, fertile soil and improving process, can furnish wines that will transcend the produce of most other countries.

The chief characteristics of Spanish wines are strength and durability. In Catalonia, where the land is propitious, the plains are carefully cultivated, and the highest spots accessible are planted with vines. Such is the fondness and industry of the people for this branch of husbandry, that wherever there is a break in the cliff with a few feet of surface, a mere ledge to which there is no other mode of access than being let down with a rope, even there the vine is raised. The wines of this province are substantial and well flavoured, and with suitable intelligence in their production and management, are likely to advance considerably in public acceptation. One of the driest species of Spanish wine is Amontillado, for the manufacture of which the fruit is gathered two or three weeks earlier than for other sorts. As the quantity made is very limited, it obtains a higher price than other kinds. It will bear no foreign mixture of any sort, and the least addition of brandy would entirely spoil it. Manzanares is a wine-district of La Mancha, and here the justly celebrated Val de Peñas is made. This is a red wine of excellent body, and with age it is equal to any in the world. The town of Beni Carlos, in Valencia, also supplies a considerable quantity of strong and full flavoured red wine, which is exported largely both to England and France. The wine of the Priory, which is reckoned the best of all the Catalonian growths, is produced on hills of loose argillaceous schist. Many of the vineyards of Arragon are planted in the same kind of soil, and chiefly with red grapes, which yield an excellent *vino tinto*. The produce *of this* province is very considerable, possessing both

strength and flavour, the best of which is made at Vittoria. Paxarete, made at an ancient monastery near Xeres, is an exceedingly sweet and choice white wine, in high esteem in this country, and the muscatel varieties of Fuencaral and Navarre present delicate dessert wines, highly agreeable to some palates. Manzanilla, a produce of the coast of Andalusia, is a wine of great purity, with considerable body and flavour: it is remarkably dry, and much commended by the faculty for its dietetic properties and entire freedom from acidity. Alicant produces an excellent red wine, which ripens by age into one of the very first order; but this town is noted most for a red sort, both strong and sweet. It comes from the *tintilla* grape, and, like the wine of Cyprus, is said to possess healing qualities, and to be efficacious as an external remedy for wounds.

Near Alicant reservoirs for the irrigation of the vine grounds have been constructed on a grand scale. About twelve miles from the town a tank is formed by damming up a valley by an embankment 240 feet high, and 40 thick. This supplies water for an entire year. Others are established in suitable localities, though of smaller dimensions, rendering the cultivation of the vine in the south an expensive operation, on account of the climate being over dry. So much felt, indeed, is this in some districts, that, at Huesca, in Arragon, so great was the drought of the summer of 1858, and the vintage so abundant, that an extensive proprietor in that locality considered it would have been easier and cheaper to irrigate his vineyards with wine than with water. At Aranda del Duero, also, in Old Castile, wine appears as cheap, and water as scarce as at Huesca, for an English gentleman of veracity travelling through that province, witnessed some bricklayers at work mixing their

mortar with wine instead of water; and it would appear that this was not an unusual occurrence, as there were several instances of houses in that town having been built with mortar prepared in this way.*

But it is in the lovely and fertile province of Andalusia that the wines most esteemed by foreigners are made. The mountains round Malaga are clothed from the valley depths to the summits with vines, and the little habitations of the peasantry peep out romantically on the acclivities around them. Many of the plantations are located at a great height from the level of the sea, where the earth for the vines requires to be very carefully secured. Wines both sweet and luscious are made in the districts near the city. The Malaga, usually so called, is always mingled with a portion of wine burnt a little in the boiling, to impart its peculiar flavour. This wine is obtained from a white grape, is very powerful, and has been long in high repute. For the mountain wines the grapes are pressed when somewhat riper than for the drier kinds. The "Lagrima," made from the droppings of very ripe grapes, suspended for that purpose without undergoing any pressure, is a very luscious wine, obtained from the large muscatel grape. In the hilly district called Axarquia, the vine is extensively cultivated; and such is the benignity of the climate, that it gives three separate harvests of grapes. The first occurs in June, and furnishes the muscatel raisins,—the bloom and the lexias, which are exported as such. The two vintage harvests take place in September and October. It is won-

* Both these anecdotes rest on the authority of Mr. Lumley, Her Majesty's Secretary of the Spanish Legation, as given in his official Report to the Foreign Office on the Commerce of Spain.—*Vide Parliamentary Reports,—Secretaries of Embassies*, 1860.

derful to observe the fruitfulness of the soil of the Axarquia. Wherever the ground is unoccupied by the vine, the prickly pear luxuriates, and feeds the cochineal insect; while olives, almonds, figs, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, and even the sugar-cane, flourish in profusion under that glorious sky. Eight millions of pounds of muscatel and bloom raisins, and thirty thousand arrobas of bloom and lexias in casks, were exported from Malaga, the produce of one season, with no less than 20,000 jars of grapes; yet the make of wine sustained no diminution. The muscatel grape cannot be cultivated more than four leagues from the coast. The chief produce of this province is white, but there is a red wine of the richer class, of a sweet yet tart taste, called Tintilla, and Tinto di Rota, *Anglicé* Tent. It is made about five leagues from Cadiz, of a grape said to be tinted throughout, and is generally used as a stomachic. There is also a wine flavoured with cherries, called Guindre, whence its name. The vineyards around Malaga produce from 30,000 to 40,000 butts per annum. Prices vary, but secondary qualities realize high rates. As much as £200 has been paid for a cask of very old prime wine. The Americans take the largest portion of the exports.

The islands of MAJORCA and MINORCA furnish wines of fair quality, but the vintage is not treated in the most judicious manner, the grapes being fermented for two or three weeks in deep stone cisterns, and added to at repeated intervals, so that the operation is frequently checked in its progress, and seldom fully completed. The liquor is drawn off into large tuns, and there the secondary fermentation, as might be expected, is often so violent as to burst the casks, though made of olive staves four inches thick, and bound with hoops proportionably strong. In Majorca the

wines made near Palma are accounted the best, and there is a very good red wine known as Aleyor. The latter island produces a muscadine wine called Pollentia.

Ireland seems to have established an early predilection for the wines of Spain. From a remote period Galway was a famous trading port with that country, and its merchants are said to have supplied nearly all Ireland with wine. The records of the town state, that in the year 1615 "upwards of 1200 tuns of Spanish wine were landed here, for account of the merchants of Galway."

The effects of the *oïdium* were severely felt throughout the kingdom, and in some districts the failure was so complete, that the growers, for several seasons, were unable to pay any rents at all. It first appeared in 1852. Vines near the coast, and on the banks of rivers or damp marshy sites, suffered most; but those on higher soils, and even in the mountains, did not always escape. The produce of the vineyards during the intensity of the malady was reduced on the average 25 per cent. of an ordinary crop; on the coast it was only one quarter of the usual yield, whilst in parts of Catalonia 90 per cent. of the crop was lost, and in Biscay it was altogether destroyed. Of the several provinces of Spain, Arragon seems to have suffered the least. Notwithstanding the generally received opinion that secondary wines will not bear a sea voyage, since the havoc committed by the grape-blight in adjoining countries a large export trade sprung up, to the great satisfaction and profit of the Spanish grower.

§ 7. *The Wines of France.*

THE whole expanse of France, from the borders of the Rhine to the base of the Pyrenees, presents a succession of fertile vineyards, where the most agreeable and delicate wines are grown in great variety and profusion. The soil contains every description of strata that is most congenial to the vine; the surface, diversified with ever-recurring and gently swelling elevations, abounds in favourable aspects; the difference of temperature in the several districts occasions numberless distinctive shades in the character and quality of the fruit; and these bountiful gifts of Nature have been greatly enhanced by the industry and skill of her active people. From the testimony of early historians, it would appear that the climate of ancient Gaul was too frigid to produce either wine or oil, and that beer and mead formed the ordinary beverage of the natives. By the fourth century, however, the propagation of the vine had made considerable progress in Aquitaine and on the banks of the Saône. With the advancement of agriculture the soil and climate gradually improved, and the inhabitants of the northern departments followed the example of their southern neighbours in the culture and utilization of the grape. The banks of the Cher, Marne, and Moselle became richly mantled with vines, and their rising fame, attracting the cupidity of contiguous nations, formed, it is said, a leading motive for their frequent irruptions. The ancient provinces of Dauphiny, Champagne, Burgundy, and the Bordelais still contribute the best growths; whilst the sweet wines of Languedoc are remarkable for their strength and aroma, and the varieties in other districts both choice and numerous.

Claret. From the frequent mention of claret wines by old writers, a large proportion of the best red growths was probably of that description. Under the denomination of wines of the Gironde are included those of the districts in the vicinity of Bordeaux, many leagues in extent, and of all the produce of France these are most familiar to foreigners. *Clairet* wines signify such as are red or rose-coloured, and the term *claret* is an English corruption of *clairet.*

The department of the Gironde is part of ancient Gascony, and is rich in the produce of the vine. About thirteen leagues to the north of Bordeaux the Medoc estate commences. It extends along the left bank of the rivers Gironde and Garonne, and comprehends the most celebrated growths of the country, including those of Châteaux Lafitte, Margaux, and Latour, as well as the vineyards yielding the secondary wines of St. Estephe, St. Julien, Pauillac, and some others. Too much stress, however, should not be placed on the value of any particular name, as the varying influences of season, temperature, and other accidental causes, often occasion the less esteemed growths to equal, and sometimes even to surpass those in greater repute.

In the Bordelais the culture of the vine generally is the same as in the other parts of France. The white wines of this district succeed best when grown on hill sides exposed to the south, and on a flinty soil. Prominent among this class stand the vines of Sauterne, with a reputation extending over a century; those of Graves, Barsac, and the Châteaux Yquem and Carbonnieux. The latter is produced in much abundance: it is distinguished by a peculiar flavour and an agreeable aroma; is lighter than Sauterne or Preignac; is less heady, less luscious, but in all respects *equally* delicate and vinous. This wine is said to have

secured an early and profitable market within the sealed shores of Turkey, *à propos* of which the following anecdote is recorded: "The estate of Carbonnieux once belonged to the abbey of St. Croix, near Bordeaux. The holy fathers realized an enormous profit in sending their wines to Turkey, notwithstanding the provisions of the Mussulman law were wholly opposed to their admission. To mystify Mahomet, however, was a holy work in the estimation of the children of St. Benet, so they exported their white wine, of which the limpidity was remarkable, as "the mineral waters of Carbonnieux." Under this plausible denomination the wine baffled the vigilance of the Ottoman custom-house, and escaped the notice and anathemas of the astute prophets of the empire. The children of the triple crown being thus triumphant over the sons of the Koran, a sagacious Frenchman remarked, "that it was much better to give wine for water, than to pass over water for wine," as too often happened in his own country.

The excellence of the Bordelais growths has been recognised through many ages, and no class of wines has maintained its ancient repute more uniformly, being characterized by a silky softness and charming perfume, which partake of the nature of the violet and the raspberry. The author of a *Trip to Languedoc*, a lively and graceful itinerary, written and published in the time of Louis XIV., describes the Garonne as being "so large at the point of land where it forms its junction with the Dordogne, that it really is like a sea; and the tide is so impetuous, that we made the passage from Blaye to Bordeaux in less than four hours. The port was so crowded with vessels, that we found it difficult to get to shore. The great fair was about to take place, and had attracted this multitude of

visitors to carry off the wine of the country. A frightful quantity is exported every year, but not of the best sort. They treat their customers like Germans, for it was not only prohibited to sell the best wines for exportation, but the merchant could not get a prime bottle at the tavern.

> Yet rude as in reality
> This famous port of our's may be,
> It has the honour, when they dine,
> To furnish half the North with wine."

Burgundy is the product of the province of that name, and possessing every essential requisite for vinous excellence, with much body and aroma, it constitutes one of the best wines that France produces. The superior red kinds are the Romanée Conti and Clos Vougeot; other growths, though of less fulness, are still very fine, with an excellent bouquet, and amongst them must be reckoned St. George, Beaune, Pomard, Nuits, Chambertin, Volnay, and Richebourg. In the territory of Volnay stands the vineyard of Santenot: the upper portion produces an esteemed white variety named Meursault; the middle and lower a red, which is considered preferable to that of Volnay. The south-west quarter of Meursault is noted for a wine called Montrachet, a delicious variety of exquisite perfume, considered as the most perfect wine of Burgundy, and even, in the opinion of many French connoisseurs, rivalling Tokay itself. The white wines of Burgundy, although numerous, are less generally known, but are not inferior to the red, either in flavour or aroma: those of Chablis, Pouilly, and some others, are recognised as of fair quality, and are much esteemed for their great delicacy.

Hermitage. A lofty granitic hill near to Tain, on the banks of the Rhone, claims the vineyards of the Hermitage,

considered by the French the fullest and richest coloured, and are generally acknowledged to rank among the choicest of their numerous wines; but it differs much with the seasons as to quality, and there is a frequent tendency to ready acescency. Among the white wines of the Rhone the growths of the Hermitage also occupy a first place. They are the driest of all the French kinds, and possess much strength and richness of body, with a powerful and peculiar aroma. The colour should be straw-yellow, which, when long kept, assumes an amber tint.

Roussillon. As we approach the fertile shores of the Mediterranean, we find the vine flourishing, and displaying the choicest fruit. With such advantages, the wines of these territories might be expected to surpass the best growths of other departments; but it is only in the sweet class of white wines, which are drawn from the ripest and richest grapes, that their superiority becomes apparent. It is here that the choicest *muscadine* wines are grown,—luscious, spirituous, and richly fragrant. The Frontignan variety is known from all others by the very marked flavour of the grape from which it is obtained. When the wine is old, the taste of the fruit becomes less perceptible, but it continues always surpassingly luscious, and its perfume has been likened to that of the elder-flower. The Rivesaltes has a rich, oily smoothness, a fragrant aroma, with a delicate flavour of the quince, and is, perhaps, the best muscadine wine grown. The red wines of Roussillon are distinguished for their great body and depth of colour, and are deservedly regarded as the strongest and most durable of all French wines. A wine of this commune, called Masdeu, the produce of a black grape, and very deep in colour, combines a rich mellow

flavour with a good bouquet. Firmness and vinosity of a very perfect kind are its chief characteristics, and it so much resembles Port wine as to be sometimes mistaken for it: it will much improve in bottle, and keep to a considerable age.

Champagne. The wines for which the ancient province of Champagne is justly celebrated, rank first in excellence among the vintages of France. By Champagne is usually understood a sparkling or frothing liquor, containing an excess of carbonic acid gas, which is set free on removing the pressure that retained it in solution. This notion is not altogether correct, for the district furnishes many excellent wines that do not effervesce. Their exhilarating virtues are familiar to every one. It should be remembered, however, that the briskest wines are not always the best, and certainly keep the worst: they are the most defective in true vinous quality, and the small portion of alcohol they contain rapidly escapes from the bubbling froth as it rises on the surface, carrying with it the aroma, and leaving the liquor that remains in the glass nearly vapid. Hence the still, or the creaming, or the slightly sparkling Champagnes are more highly prized by connoisseurs, and carry a better price than the effervescent. Sillery has no sparkle at all. It is a dry, still liquor of a light amber colour, with considerable body and a delicious bouquet, and being one of the best fermented Champagnes, may be drunk with great pleasure and safety.

It is on the banks of the Marne,—at Bouzy, Sillery, Epernay, and some other estates, that the best "river wines," as they are sometimes called, are produced. The white kinds will not admit being mixed with any but those of their own growth, and they generally remain the pure produc-

tion of the spot they are named from. The grey Champagne is obtained by treading the grapes a quarter of an hour before they are taken to the press. A rose-coloured variety is formed by continuing this operation a longer time; but in the commune of Rheims this tinted produce ranks as of second quality only, being lightly tinged with a little strong red wine, or a few drops of elderberry liquor, which not only injures both the taste and quality, but checks any preference for wines of that colour that might otherwise prevail.

The province of Champagne is very fruitful, and produces wine almost endless in variety and quality. Some classes, however, are too meagre to engage the notice of foreigners, while others are too light to bear exportation. At the head of the white Champagnes, Bouzy and Sillery find place,—still, yet spirituous liquors, distinguished for their dry and agreeable taste and wholesome properties. The utmost care and skill are unremittingly devoted to the manufacture of the sparkling wines, and bringing them to perfection, and it is interesting to observe the amount of assiduity and expensive labour bestowed on the process. The vine-crop designed for this purpose is gathered with the greatest care possible. The grapes for the purest wines consist only of those raised from an approved species of vine. Every grape that has not acquired a perfect maturity, every decayed berry touched with the frost, or pricked, is rejected. In collecting, in emptying the baskets, and in removal to the press-room, every motion that can blemish the fruit is avoided, as well as any injurious action from the sun's rays. When the quantity is sufficient for a pressing, they are heaped as gently as possible on the wine-press, and the bunches methodically

arranged. Perhaps there is no production of the soil that requires more care than the grape to make it produce these delicious wines in full perfection. The great complaint against Champagne wine has been, that it cannot be obtained of a uniform quality. This is principally owing to its being put into casks of a hundred and sixty litres only in size. The wine in every cask will not, therefore, be alike, for the minutest difference in the process of preparing it for the market will affect the quality. The portion which is intended to effervesce is put into bottles in March and April after it is made; that designed for still wine is not bottled until the autumn. The effervescence is owing to the carbonic acid gas generated in the fermentation. The gas being thus compressed by chemical affinities, scarcely begins to develope itself in the cask, but is very quickly reproduced in bottle. In this process the saccharine and tartarous properties are decomposed. If the latter principle predominate, the wine effervesces strongly, but is weak; if the saccharine principle be considerable, and the alcohol present in sufficient quantity to limit its decomposition, the quality is good.

The wines, moreover, do not ripen uniformly; some will effervesce after being in bottle fifteen days, others will demand as many months. One wine will require a change of temperature, and must be brought from a deep cellar to another on the surface; a second will not exhibit a forward state before August; another kind, when patience is exhausted, and the expected developement almost hopeless, will flush up all of a sudden. Considered, indeed, in all its bearings, the ripening maturity of Champagne wines is most uncertain and changeable. The difference of the spot of growth; the mixture of fruit; the process in making;

the tunning and preservation in the wood; the glass of the bottles; the aspect, depth, and ventilation of the cellar,—all have a varied, and often inexplicable influence on the phenomena of effervescence.

For the sparkling wines the strength of the bottles and their uniform thickness are carefully ascertained. They must be new, are closely examined and jingled together in pairs, each against the other, and every one with an air-bubble in the glass, or with too long or too narrow a neck, or with the least imperfection or malformation, is put aside. The bottles, when carefully and expeditiously filled, are laid horizontally in piles five or six feet high. In July and August considerable breakage happens, occasioned by the expansion of the carbonic acid gas, and a loss of four to ten per cent. is usually occasioned. Sometimes, however, it amounts to thirty or forty per cent. It is remarkable, too, what uncertainty attends the process, for of two piles of the very same wine, in the same part of the cellar, hardly a bottle may be left of one, while the other remains impassive and without effervescence at all. A current of fresh air will sometimes occasion the wine to develope itself fiercely. The proprietor is thus placed every season in the alternative of suffering much loss by breakage, or put to great expense in aiding wine to ripen that will not progressively advance itself. Of the two evils he prefers submitting to breakage, rather than incur the trouble and cost of correcting the inertness of the liquor. If the damage be not more than eight or ten per cent. the owner is content; if it become more serious, he has the pile taken down, and the bottles placed upright for a suitable time. Sometimes he removes it into a deeper cellar, or finally uncorks it to disengage the superabundant gas, and to fill

up the void left under the cork. This last operation occupies considerable time, and adds materially to the outlay.

The piles are longitudinal in form, and ranged parallel to each other, with a very small space between. The daily breakage, before it reaches its fullest extent, will be in one day perhaps five bottles, another ten, the next fifteen. When the gas developes itself with unwonted rapidity, the wine is wasted in large quantities, and it is difficult to save any portion of it. The overflow collects together by means of channels cut in the floor for that purpose. The workmen enter the cellar in wire masks, to guard against the fragments dispersed when the breakage is frequent, as in the month of August, the glass being often projected with considerable force. On displacing a pile, bottles are sometimes found, in spite of the cork and seal continuing still entire, to have diminished in quantity nearly one half by evaporation, which has to be replaced; whilst in others a sediment is discernible, which it is necessary to remove. This, by no means an easy task, is managed by the workmen with much dexterity.

The breakage ceases in the month of September, and in October the wine is ready for sale. If they continue any great time longer in the cellar, they are uncorked and submitted to a second dislodgment of the deposit, and sometimes even to a third. It is a strict rule never to send Champagne from the factory without this being done, about fifteen days prior to its removal, for if omitted, the sediment would affect the brightness of the wine by the transit. The non-effervescing wines, if of the white species, all undergo the operation of uncorking and clearing at least once before they are sent away. Thus, to the

last moment the wine continues in the maker's charge, the process is troublesome, irregular, and sufficiently expensive to account for the superior price demanded for Champagne of the first quality.

There is an exquisite delicacy pertaining to the wines of Champagne that is more sensible to the foreigner than is the quality which commends the richest Burgundy to the taste of the French amateur, and has laid the foundation of the unrivalled fame that has attended them through ages. The present perfection of Champagne may be dated from the coronation of Louis XIII., *anno* 1610; but the recognition of its worth can be traced back to the beginning of the 14th century,—an early reputation that since has never lacked willing votaries. Even princes and sovereigns of other countries offered tribute and allegiance, for is it not written that Francis I. of France, Pope Leo X., Charles V. of Spain, and Henry VIII. of England, possessed all of them a vineyard at Aÿ, their exclusive property? besides retaining a resident superintendent, to secure the genuine produce each for his own table.

At Cahors, in the department of the Lot, they make white, rose-coloured, red, and black wines. The red and white are produced in the usual way. The rose-coloured variety is made of the weakest white wine poured upon the murk of the black wines, which are never pressed. They gain colour and strength from this process, but are not held in any great esteem. The black wines are obtained from the fine *auxerrois* or *pied de perdrix* grape, so called because its stalk is red. Bordeaux is the principal market for this liquor, where it is used to strengthen or colour light wines. It is sometimes mingled with aromatics to make a common ratifia, and sometimes it is sold

pure. The Cahors wines possess but little perfume, but they are not deficient in body, and are very durable.

Lons-le-Saulnier, in the department of the Jura, is noted for its red and white wines, no less than for its *vins de paille*, or straw wines, and several effervescent varieties, white, grey, and rose-coloured. The straw wines are luscious and stomachic, resembling somewhat the vintages of Spain. The sparkling white wines are good, though not to be compared with Champagne. But one of the most extensive vine districts in France, if quantity rather than quality be considered, is the department of the Seine and Oise, which contains 16,298 hectares of vines, yielding 849,718 hectolitres of wine. The whole of this vast crop is of very middling quality, even regarded as ordinary wines of the country, with seemingly little capability of future improvement.

The wines in France called *vins de liqueur*, are those in which the saccharine principle has not entirely disappeared, and been converted into alcohol during the process of fermentation. Of these are the sweet wines of Salces, Rivesaltes, Lunel, Frontignan, Beziers, and similar kinds, both red and white.

Vins de paille are so denominated from the grapes being laid for several months upon straw, before they are taken to the press. Sometimes, instead of being placed on straw, they are hung up in straw tresses. The produce is a wine of great richness and delicacy. *Vin mousseux*, an effervescing liquor, may be best described by what is understood in England of Champagne.

Vins cuits, or boiled wines, are of ancient date, having, it is supposed, passed from Asia and Greece. They are common in Italy and Spain as well as in France. The

richest and finest grapes are selected, usually of the muscadine species, gathered during the hottest part of the day in order that they may be free from dew, and humidity of every kind. The wine, when boiled, is reduced to one-third of its original quantity. It is very pleasant to the taste, of a deep colour, delicate and generous. When very old these wines are often passed off for Cyprus, Malmsey, Tinto, or Malaga of the best kind, as the owner may wish them to appear. Boiling is also adopted to make new wine have the appearance of old. Bordeaux wine of two years old so treated, will acquire the flavour of that which is ten or twelve in age.

In the south of France a description of wine is made called *muet*, for which the grapes are trodden and pressed at the vintage, and the juice is clarified immediately, to prevent fermentation. The must is then barrelled, and treated with fumings of sulphur, two or three times repeated. This wine never ferments; it has a sweetish flavour, with a strong sulphurous odour. It is sometimes called Calabrian wine, and is generally employed to give strength, sweetness, and durability to wines deficient in these qualities.

A very excellent variety of grape is grown in the island of CORSICA, called the *sciaccarello*. A fine red wine of superior quality is also made at Sartena: it bears a delicious flavour, and is stomachic. For its manufacture the best red grapes are selected, and the stems of the bunches are twisted eight days before the vintage; they are then gathered, and kept eight days more on a floor, when the grapes are removed from the stems and pressed. This wine is so rich and luscious, that it is not fit to drink under two years. It may be kept twenty, and in gaining age it

acquires strength, and an exquisite bouquet. The vines of Corsica are good, but care and attention appear to be wanting in manufacturing the wine. The portion exported goes for the most part to Leghorn, and is frequently there sold to the merchants of the North for Malaga, which it is made to resemble in colour and taste.

The grape blight first showed itself in France in the year 1850, when it infested some of the vineyards in the vicinity of Paris. In 1851 it extended its destructive course throughout the empire, attaining its maximum of virulence in 1854, from which time may be dated the decrease of the distemper, and consequent improvement of the vintages of subsequent seasons. The amount of loss sustained from its ravages can hardly be estimated, but the direful effects of the visitation were painfully manifest, and much apprehension prevailed as to its permanent influence on the future of the grape. The immediate results were the destruction of a multitude of vines, a reduction of the wine harvest to one-fifth of its usual average, and the compulsion on the part of France, for the first time in her history, to become an importer of wine from the adjacent Peninsula, and of spirits from the island of Great Britain.

§ 8. *The Wines of Germany and Hungary.*

In the remoter periods of European civilization the geographical position of Germany presented formidable obstacles to the plantation and successful culture of the vine in that country. Various epochs have been assigned for its introduction, and while some go so far back as the Asiatic Bacchus, others are content to ascribe the first plantings to the Emperor Probus, about the year 280. That no vineyards existed at the period when Tacitus wrote his description of that country is manifest, for he asserts that the soil was unpropitious to every sort of fruit tree,—the usual beverage of the people being a kind of beer procured from wheat or barley, and foreign wines only to be met with in the neighbourhood of the greater rivers. Whether, in the course of the two following centuries, the climate could have undergone sufficient amelioration to allow of this species of culture seems very doubtful, but it is not unlikely that the Germans derived the first vines from their Roman conquerors. Be that as it may, there has been sufficient improvement in temperature to admit of the free culture of the grape even beyond the line assigned for its successful propagation in France. Whoever has visited the Rhine must have felt sensible of the present beauty of its vineyards overlaying steep and shore, interlaced with romantic ruins, towns ancient and venerable, smiling villages, and the rapid broad German river reflecting the rich scenery on its banks. Nowhere is the fondness for vine-cultivation more evident, in every grade and class, than in the German wine districts. The humblest peasant has his square yard of vinery; every accessible spot on the declivities is deco-

rated with the benignant plant; landscapes of greater beauty and luxuriance can nowhere be seen. From Bonn to Coblentz, and from thence to Mayence, the country is studded with extensive vineyards. The choicest vintages, however, are limited to a small portion of the Rhinegau; but the produce of some of the vines above Mentz, particularly of those at Hockheim, is usually classed with the best Rhine wines, being of nearly equal excellence.

The German wines are a distinct class in character from any other variety. They are dry, finely flavoured, and endure age beyond example. Of late years they have been much improved in quality by the unceasing attention bestowed on their growth, and a better management of the manufacture. The more celebrated of these wines, after being fermented in separate casks and repeatedly racked, are suffered to remain in huge vats, to acquire perfection by time. They mellow best in large vessels; hence the renowned Heidelberg tun, 31 feet long by 21 feet high, and holding six hundred hogsheads: it is embellished with all kinds of fantastic devices. Tübingen, Grüningen, and Königstein could all boast of their enormous tuns, the latter being capacious enough to store 3709 hogsheads. As their white wines were considered to mature better thus than in casks of ordinary dimensions, they were usually kept carefully filled. The Germans ever had credit for being excellent topers, and of taking care of "the liquor they loved."

The finer class of German wines are drier than the white wines of France, and are characterized by a delicate flavour and aroma quite peculiar. Some of them have what the French call the *gout de pierre;* but as the soils are very various, so no two growths exactly resemble each other,

even to a taste not over fastidious. It is commonly supposed in this country, that the wines of the Rhine and Moselle are naturally acid; the inferior kinds may often be so, but this is not their constant character. In favourable seasons they are free from acidity; in bad seasons they contract an excess of malic acid, and are consequently liable to the attendant imperfections. Hence the wines made in warm and dry years, such as 1811, or "the year of the comet," as it is sometimes called, are always in great demand, and fetch exorbitant prices. Their chief distinction, however, is their extreme durability, in which they are not surpassed by any other species of wine. Rhenish wines formerly had no place at the tables of the wealthy before they were nearly, if not quite, fifty years old. They are drunk from green-tinted glasses, as thin almost as paper, which it is thought imparts to the draught a greater zest, yet seeming to the stranger almost too fragile to contain the liquid

As Rhenish contains but little more than half the quantity of alcohol usually found in Madeira wine, and as this amount is often reduced by long keeping so low as 7 or 8 per cent., it is evident that the conservative power does not reside in the spirituous property of these liquors. Their dryness proves that the saccharine matter, which is seldom in great abundance in the Rhenish grape, has been fully decomposed, and, from their brightness, it may be inferred that the superfluous leaven has been entirely precipitated. It is to the presence of a large proportion of tartaric acid, not easily separated, that we may look for their chief preservative quality. With most light wines, however, this is not the case. Their feebleness will not admit the deposit of any portion of the tartar without risking their total ruin;

but in Rhenish wines not even the evaporation occasioned by long keeping in the wood is sufficient to derange the affinities. The proportion of alcohol, doubtless, is sensibly diminished, and the wine becomes more tart than before; yet this acidity is still very distant from vinegar, and by no means ungrateful to the palate, whilst the colour is heightened, and the peculiar fragrance and flavour are more fully developed. Acids, however, are said to generate gout, and in England German wines are on that account forbidden to gouty patients; this, probably, is but a vulgar error, for the gout is a disease rarely known on the banks of the Rhine, where hardly any other wine is in use. While strong southern wines suffer from age after a certain period in bottle, the Rhine wines seem endowed with inextinguishable vitality. It sometimes happens that new wine gets frozen. To recover it, racking into sulphured casks is resorted to, with the addition of a little spirit. It is the aqueous portion of the wine that congeals. This has furnished wine-growers with a hint, which they have advantageously adopted; viz. to expose their wine to a frost that will congeal a proportion of the watery part, and then rack off the residue, which is found to be improved both in body and flavour. Ancient writers tell us, that during the Augustan age the winter was so severe in some parts of Germany, that wine was frozen in the casks, and cut out with hatchets. This would not be very improbable, where the cold is sufficiently intense to freeze the cask entirely through.

The whole eastern bank of the Rhine, called the Rheingau, has been remarkable for its wines during many centuries. It was once the property of the Church, and extends from a little below Mentz to Rüdesheim, including

a space of rather more than nine miles in length by about four in breadth. The entire district is a delicious vine-garden. At their head, on a crescent hill of red soil, stands the far-famed Johannesberger, which is indebted for its celebrity to the high flavour and perfume peculiar to its produce, and entire freedom from acidity. The quantity manufactured is not large. This vineyard is the property of Prince von Metternich. But a small portion of the prime vintages are permitted to come into the market; yet a portion of the growth at the foot of the hill is always to be had, and even this is preferable in point of quality to most of the other Rhine wines, and bears a high price. Next to this in rank may be placed the produce of the Steinberg vine. It is the strongest of all the Rhine wines, and possesses much sweetness and delicacy of flavour. That of 1811, called the "Cabinet," has been compared to the drier kind of Lunel, and has been sold on the spot as high as half-a-guinea the bottle. Some persons, however, give the preference to Rüdesheimer, which contains a high flavour with much body, and is freer from acerbity than most other growths. Grafenberg, once the appanage of the wealthy convent of Eberbach, produces very choice wine, which carries a price equal to the Rüdesheimer; whilst Markebrun and Rothenberg afford wines prized for their softness and delicacy of flavour.

The Hockheimer is, strictly speaking, a Mayne wine. The town itself stands in the midst of vineyards, and from its name is derived the appellation Hock, a term too commonly applied in England to all German wines. Most of the other varieties of the Upper and Lower Rhine can only be classed with first-rate ordinary kinds, and the Moselle wines, except in very propitious seasons, generally fall into

the same rank. The better sorts are clear and dry, with a light, pleasant flavour and high aroma, not unlike that of the best Graves wine; but they sometimes contract a slaty taste, from the strata on which they grow. The sparkling varieties possess many agreeable properties, and of that character are the produce of Scharzofberg, Josephshofer, and some others. The Germans themselves say, "Rhine wine good; Neckar pleasant; Frankfort bad; Moselle innocent." Of the remaining German wines there are few that call for particular notice. The banks of the Neckar, indeed, yield a red wine of tolerable character and bouquet; but as we advance further south the vintages degenerate, and in the Austrian states the wines are nearly all of inferior quality, being sharp, and often very acid. Nevertheless, from long use, the natives prefer them to any others, and even consider their tartness a criterion of excellence. In Moravia, however, several generous wines are produced, and in the Tyrol we meet with very good red varieties, that vie with some of the better growths of Italy, but will seldom bear keeping. The better kinds of German wines are, perhaps, the most wholesome in the world, and the golden wine of the "Father river" fully deserves its altar to Bacchus.

Running through the Alpine mountain range, with its icy glaciers and peaks of perpetual snow, SWITZERLAND might have fairly claimed exemption from all allegiance or participation in the culture of the vine, or adding in any degree to the general store of its exhilarating produce; such a barren issue, however, does not prove to be the fact, and her contribution to the vinous commonwealth is neither sparse nor useless. With every disadvantage of her northern latitude, she is yet equal to the production of

good and wholesome wine in sufficient quantity to meet the requirements of her own people, with somewhat even to spare. The wine of Switzerland in the best repute is raised in the canton of the Grisons: it has an aromatic flavour, is white from a red grape, and known as Chiavenna wine. At Sierre, in the Valais district, they make a Malvasia also of good quality, and both are of the luscious kind. The white Yvorne of Bex is likewise held in much esteem. The best red varieties of the valley of the Rhone are grown at Viesch (pronounced *visp*,) and at Sion. The former, called Salquener, and obtained from a small black grape in the vale of Zermatt, is a pleasant wine, of good body, flavour, and bouquet; its familiar appellation is *vin d'enfer*, and its German name is Salqetsch. The Sion variety, called Baliot, is but little inferior in character or quality, and the produce of La Marque and Amigny, in the commune of Martigny, is of good reputation.

Red wine in much abundance, and of tolerable quality, is grown at Schaffhausen. At Basle they make the "wine of blood," so named from the combat of Birs, in the reign of Louis XI., when sixteen hundred Swiss contended with thirty thousand French, of whom only sixteen survived, more dying from fatigue and exhaustion than by the arms of their foes. In the Valteline they make a wine resembling the aromatic varieties of the south of France: the red kinds of that district are sound and of good quality, and remarkable for their durability. The canton of Vaud yields the largest quantity, and the vintage near Lausanne resembles the dry wines of the Rhine in quality, and they keep well. The red of Berne is good; that of Neufchâtel equal only to third-class Burgundy.

A very generous red wine is made in the Valteline from

the red grape, which is suffered to hang on the vine till November. The fruit being thus fully matured, it is gathered, taken to a large store-room, and hung up by the stems for several weeks. The bunches are carefully examined, and every decayed or injured berry is thrown aside, so that none but sound fruit is reserved for the press. The wine so made is remarkably luscious, with great strength, and will keep well for a century. The Swiss, when it is a year old, bore a hole two-thirds of the way up the head of the cask, drink the wine down to the tap, and then refill it.

HUNGARY contains numerous vineyards, but as they are chiefly in the hands of the peasantry, who pay little attention to the selection of the ripe from the immature fruit, the good wine which this country furnishes is limited to a few districts. The excellence, however, of the Tokay, and some other kinds, shows to what perfection these growths might, by a more careful system of management, readily attain. About thirty varieties of Hungarian wine are reckoned, the most celebrated—the Imperial Tokay, being the product of a district around the town of that name. The stratum of this locality is chiefly volcanic; the grape is large, and of a rich, luscious taste. Several species of grape, mostly white, are cultivated, which ripen early, and yield much saccharine juice. The wines of Hungary are endowed with so many commendable qualities, that a relaxation of prohibitive fiscal dues, less defective mode of treatment, and improved means of transport, are alone wanting to bring them to the notice and patronage of the English consumer. They can boast considerable body, possess a fine flavour, with a very delicate aroma, and are obtainable in considerable variety and abundance. They

have been happily pronounced by a competent English traveller and connoisseur as being drier than French wines, more mellow than those of the Rhine, and more piquant than the choicest of Spain. The varieties include both red and white sorts, and form four distinct classes; viz. liqueur wines, good dry table wines, effervescent wines, and wines of local consumption. The liqueur kinds, of which the Tokay class is most celebrated, are not the finest samples the country produces. It is amongst the dry table wines that flavour and aroma are found in perfection. The effervescent class, known as Hungarian "Champagne," are almost exclusively made in the Pressburg commune. The sweet wines are called "ausbruch," and resemble the "straw" wines of France.

In order that the fruit may attain its fullest ripeness, the vintage in Hungary is delayed as long as possible, seldom commencing till the end of October, by which time a considerable portion of the grapes become shrivelled and half-dried. When a sufficient quantity has been collected they are placed in a cask, the bottom of which is perforated, and the juice that exudes, without any further pressure than their own weight, constitutes the syrupy liquor called Tokay Essence. This keeps without any further preparation, and is highly valued. To obtain the *ausbruch*, or second quality, the grapes are next trodden with the feet, and a small portion of the wine essence is added to the must. By this addition the aromatic principle, which in the Tokay grape is very powerful, becomes more fully extracted from the husks. The mixture is well stirred, allowed to stand twenty-four hours, and then is set to ferment. The product forms the famous Tokay. The best quality has so peculiar a flavour of the aromatic kind, and

is so luscious, that the taste is not easily forgotten. The vineyard belongs to the Emperor and some of the nobles. The genuine is not usually vended in the wood, but chiefly in bottle, and is so highly prized as to sell in Vienna at £12 sterling the dozen, the bottle containing ordinarily not more than a pint and a quarter English.

The high value set upon Tokay is another example of the caprice of taste or fashion in wine. The rich muscadine of Syracuse, or the Lagrima of Malaga, seems in every respect equal to it in richness; for although the peculiar flavour of Tokay will readily distinguish it from them, yet that flavour has little more than its singularity to recommend it, and is such as persons accustomed to the austerer wines do not always relish. There seems little probability, however, of its speedily losing this high estimation, as a small cask of 200 bottles, vintage of 1811, was, in the summer of 1860, purchased by the Emperor Louis Napoleon at two guineas the bottle.

The AUSTRIAN wines, although for the most part but of very middling quality, contain a few that may challenge comparison with all but the best Rhenish, French, and Spanish produce. The greatest future is probably reserved to the Hungarian, Lower Austrian, and Dalmatian wines, —the latter, as well as the coast-land produce, being principally of a kind suitable for the dessert. In recent years the trade in Austrian wines has made much progress, and, with the growing means of improved transit, there is fair reason to anticipate a still more rapid extension.

The wine of Buda is red, and was once in great favour in this country. The growths of Palunia and Tropfwermuth pass under the general name of *Vermuth*. They are a preparation of grapes with wormwood, seeds, and spices

of different kinds, over which they pour old wine and cork it up. It is an excellent stomachic, much drank at home, and as far back as the time of Queen Elizabeth was known and esteemed in this country for its refreshing and restorative properties. It is one of the few liqueurs that still maintain their ancient reputation, and although of late years its use here has fallen into abeyance, attention has been recently revived in its favour, and from its agreeable flavour and peculiar dietetic virtues, will probably again resume a place in general acceptation. This wine is not expensive, nor is it a factitious compound, or it would not have found a place here. In the interests of the nervous invalid, the dyspeptic, the languid sufferer from the influence of tropical climates, incipient phthisis, or want of stamina, it deserves especial mention, and to such it may prove a beverage beyond price.

It might have been reasonably expected that the cooler regions of the north of Europe would have escaped the blighting effects of the vine malady; but although its invasion was partial, and its general effect less destructive, the ravages it committed in Frioul, Dalmatia, and in the southern Tyron were severe. The injury occasioned by the inroad of the *oïdium* in the provinces it infested gradually augmented, until it amounted to one-half of the vine, when it slowly abated, until it disappeared altogether. During the prevalence of the disease in France, large consignments of the Hungarian wines were sold by French merchants as genuine Bordeaux,—no light circumstance, for although, perhaps, they cannot compete with the best produce of the Bordelais, they certainly rival successfully French wines of the second order.

§ 9. *The Wines of South Africa.*

THE continent of Africa can no longer boast of its Mareotic wine; the vines, once so famed, are now cultivated principally for their shade, and the fruit is neglected or dried for making raisins. It does not appear that wine is made on either side of the vast peninsula, though Ethiopia yields very good grapes. The heat and aridity in some parts, and the excessive richness of the soil in others, are equally prejudicial to the culture of the vine. Deserts of burning sand and a savage population occupy the middle portion of this quarter of the globe, and it is only at European settlements in the southern hemisphere that civilization has introduced one of its most abiding luxuries on any tolerable scale of extent or success. Until the subjection of the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch, no vine culture in southern Africa had been attempted. The climate is well known to be exceedingly favourable to vegetation. Fruits are ripened on the west coast of the colony in the greatest perfection; and no part of the world, perhaps, produces plants and flowers more distinguished for the elegance of their forms and colours than southern Africa. Resembling in temperature that of the south of Europe, it further affords every facility to the husbandman, and repays his care with early and abundant harvests. But, for the successful melioration of the vine, excellence of climate is not the only requisite, and the nature of the soil has often a yet more immediate influence on the quality of the fruit. In this respect the Cape is somewhat deficient: few of the grounds first appropriated to vineyards contain the strata most suitable to the plant, and probably the produce thus contracted some of

that slatiness of taste common to wines grown in uncongenial soils.

The principal vineyards at the Cape are situate in the vicinity of the capital, where the beauty of the climate and equality of the temperature are unquestionably favourable to vine culture. But the proper choice of a site for a vinery was seldom taken into consideration by the Dutch, who first commenced planting under the governorship of Von Riebeck, in 1650. The fertility of some of the ground near the early settlements was very great; yet not, on that account alone, more adapted for raising the vine: plantations were nevertheless formed on ineligible spots very soon after the settlers began to take up the land.

Stellenbosh, a considerable wine district north of False Bay, is so named from the then governor Stel, and the bushes that covered it. He, with more than Dutch cupidity, seized upon large portions of territory for himself, and drew a great profit from the vine-grounds and corn-fields in that part of the colony. To obviate the deficiency of moisture during the exhaustive dry season, he constructed a reservoir in the mountains to irrigate his farms and vines, conveying the water in a channel by his wine-stores to a mill where he ground his corn.

Drakenstein, another settlement north-east of Stellenbosh, was settled by a colony of French refugees on the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685. Through the indolence or ignorance, however, which then prevailed, it would appear that land, more applicable for the growth of corn, was indiscriminately appropriated to raising the grape; consequently in no country was there greater room for improvement, and none in which energy and science would earlier have exhibited their healing influence. But

the avarice of the primitive Dutch farmers, like their inveterate adherence to established custom, was long ineradicable; and notwithstanding they had before their eyes, in the plantations of Constantia, the beneficial results of appropriate soil and site, they declined to profit by the example, or take any pains to select the fittest locality for their vine-grounds, but persevered in establishing them as convenience prompted, or wherever they were likely to gather the heaviest crop. This improvident oversight was all the more reprehensible, as there were many select spots well adapted for the purpose; but these were disregarded and passed over by inexperienced settlers for ground chosen from caprice, for facility of access, or the mistaken policy of the planters. Their descendants are still the cultivators, and although with them amendment can hardly be otherwise than slow, progress has been made, and the vintages are unquestionably better now than they were only a few years since. There is no reason why their labours should not ultimately be attended with ample success: except a volcanic soil, there are traces of every other kind of land congenial to the vine, and doubtless, with plantations now transferred to better sites, and due care in cultivating, harvesting, and after-treatment of the grape, a vast deal of wholesome and annually improving wine will be produced.

The wines of South Africa comprise both red and white varieties, the larger portion being dry. Besides the delicious and highly prized Constantia, other excellent wines are made at Paarl, as well as at Drakenstein and Stellenbosh. The fruit is rich, full, and large, leaving none of the earthy taint formerly considered a characteristic of the wine. It is not improbable, therefore, that this peculiarity

was derived from the stalks and stems; for all usually went into the vat together, the whole management being generally confided to negroes. The culture, too, was exceedingly faulty, the process of fermentation unskilfully conducted; the preliminary operations were rude and slovenly performed, whilst, in order to raise the greatest possible quantity of grapes, the farmers, regardless alike of vinous flavour or quality, resorted to the reprehensible practice of manuring their vines with fresh litter; and wherever they had a good command of water, they further impaired the produce by excess of irrigation. But obstacles such as these are not insurmountable, and much amelioration has already attended better methods of culture, and the application of more care, skill, and system in the process of manufacture.

Such having been the imperfect mode of conducting the vintage, it can hardly be matter of surprise that so much of its produce proved inferior and unpalatable. The only exceptions worth mention are the growths of the Upper and Lower Constantia, so named after the wife of the Dutch governor, Vander Stel, their founder; the plantation forms two contiguous properties, situate at the eastern base of Table Mountain, eight miles from Cape Town, and the vintage ranks deservedly high among first-class luscious wines. The soil is composed of a sandy gravel and decomposed granite, lying upon a gentle slope well open to the influence of the sun: it is of very moderate dimensions, and divided into two parts, separated merely by a hedge,—the former producing the red sweet wine, the latter the white sort, and also a wine called Cape Hock. The vintage is conducted with much care, the grapes being freed from the stalks, and blemished fruit and other impurities

removed before they are pressed. As the whole quantity of sweet wine annually made does not exceed one hundred pipes, the price is high and well maintained. The produce of both grounds is similar in character and quality, yet connoisseurs profess to discern a considerable difference between the two. They have always commanded a high reputation, and a century ago their rarity caused them to sell for between two and three shillings a bottle on the spot. Although the vintages of Constantia leave no unpleasant taste on the palate, and are deservedly esteemed for their surpassing richness, yet, in point of flavour and aroma, they can scarcely compare with the muscadine wines of Languedoc and Roussillon, or the malmsies of Paxarete and Malaga.

Other African wines, as we have seen, on their first importation here were inferior to the produce of the older and better cultivated vineyards of Europe; but in character, body, and flavour they now exhibit a marked improvement, and the awakened intelligence and sedulous attention bestowed by the colonists on this object, promise well for a reputation steadily advancing year by year. That the wines are innately pure, wholesome, and free from acidity, is fully established on high analytical authority; and as former objections to their truly vinous properties are clearly preventible, their progress towards a higher standard of perfection has been recognised by the British consumer, as evinced in their still extending use and popularity. This is abundantly confirmed by the evidence of official revenue returns. In the year 1853 the quantity of South African wine landed in this country was 102,816 gallons; by 1859 this had increased to 781,581, the annual imports of the intervening period being 560,040

imperial gallons, or more than double that of five preceding years ending 1850, the average of which did not exceed 265,000 gallons.

The older appellation of "Cape wine," which had become a by-word and reproach to earlier shipments, has given place to the more comprehensive term of "South African wine;" and there is honest reason for believing, that for vinous excellence and utility they equal many high-class continental wines, and are superior to most of the secondary growths of either France or Spain. It will not be unreasonable, therefore, to expect, that the recent legislative reduction and equalization of heavy fiscal imposts will be promotive of the comfort, the health, and general temperance of the community at large, and that the consumption of wine will be sufficiently expanded to stimulate the ambition and industry of the colonial proprietor to unremitting exertion, until his vines equal in quality and rival in repute the ancient plantations of European excellence and long-awarded celebrity.

§ 10. *Madeira and the Canaries.*

Most of the wine countries which now yield the choicest produce have been indebted to Greece for their vines. Those of Crete were long sought for in preference to all others; and where the climate has been genial, they seem to have experienced little degeneration in their adoptive soils. At a very early period they were introduced into Spain and Portugal, and thence propagated to the more northern regions of Europe. The island of Madeira, however, is said to have been supplied with plants brought directly from Candia by direction of Prince Henry, who colonized it in 1421. The benignity of the climate and the volcanic soils that there abound were so favourable to their growth, that it was said in its earliest days to have produced more grapes than leaves, and clusters full a span in length,—a single bunch of one dessert grape often weighing twenty pounds. Sugar-canes were first planted there from Sicily, and for a long time their produce was the principal commodity which Madeira yielded to commerce: it was not until a much later period that its wines became generally known, and acquired that distinction to which their eminent qualities so justly entitled them. The north side of the island, though sufficiently fertile, being exposed to cold winds and fogs from the sea, is less suitable to the culture of the vine than the southern part, where all the best vines are accordingly situated. Most of the red grapes are appropriated to the manufacture of white wines; but a portion of them are converted into *tinta*, or red wine, which, as long as it retains its colour, is sufficiently agreeable, though generally deficient in the high aroma for which the white sorts are distinguished.

The vines are planted in lines in the grounds fronting the houses, upon trellis-work seven feet high, and the branches conducted over the tops, so as to lie horizontal to the sun's rays. They thus afford a canopy for those who walk under them, yielding a delightful shade in that ardent climate. On the northern side they are mostly trained up chesnut trees, to screen them from the violence of the wind, but some of the vines are supported on frames not more than three feet high. Fruit is grown as high as 2700 feet of elevation, and wine is made at 2000. On certain rocky grounds, open to the full influence of the sun's action, the celebrated Malmsey wine is grown. As the grapes from which it is obtained require to be over-ripe, or partially shrivelled, they are allowed to hang for about a month later than those used in the manufacture of dry wines. Another highly esteemed sort is the Sercial, said to be the product of the Hock grape transplanted to the island, where it will grow only on particular spots. When new it is very harsh and austere, and requires to be long kept before it is thoroughly mellowed. It has a full body, a rich aromatic flavour peculiar to itself, and combines all the requisites of a perfect wine. The quantity produced, however, is very small.

Madeira wine must attain age on the island, if not sent to a warmer climate to promote its maturity. The demand for it in the British colonies, to which at one period it was alone exported, first led to a knowledge of the benefit to be derived from its removal to a tropical climate; and since it has come into more general use, it is prepared for particular markets by a voyage to the East or West Indies. Cargoes thus ripened sell for much higher prices than those imported directly from the island; but it does not necessarily follow

that the consignments which have made the longest or hottest voyage turn out always the best. Much depends on the original quality of the wine, and on the quantity of spirit mixed with it; and although many choice samples are so obtained, yet a large proportion of them want their full flavour, and are more liable to acidity. The change, however, which takes place in their character by this system is particularly striking. Perhaps no wines receive so much improvement by exposure to the influence of artificial heat, as those in which a large amount of adventitious spirit is infused. When new, the wines of Madeira are characterized by a degree of roughness and fierceness that renders them unfit for use, and the drier kinds have often a marked acescency, which would seem to predict a speedy decay; yet it usually happens that during the voyage, or after being for some time subjected to a high temperature, this sharpness wholly disappears, or at least becomes greatly subdued.

The great additional expense attending this mode of improving Madeira wine has occasioned the adoption of various artificial methods to gain its full excellence, through a perfect decomposition of the saccharine and other active principles tending to fermentation: for this purpose both temperature and agitation are necessary. Some imagine the character of the wines to have deteriorated of late years; but the simple truth is, that Madeira, like all other wine-countries, furnishes, along with a few superlative growths, a great many of indifferent quality. England formerly received only a small portion of its produce; but an extensive and increasing demand subsequently led to the importation of a large quantity of secondary sorts, and these being sold much above their value, necessarily brought the whole

into discredit. Although our American and West-India colonies were early and chiefly supplied with the wines of Madeira, yet the growths of that island had little favour in this country before the middle of the last century. Spain and Portugal, and the Canaries still furnished the stronger white wines, and Rhenish came in place of the light vintages of France. Our officers, who had served in the West Indies, and become acquainted with the fine properties of the wines of Madeira, are said, on their return, to have introduced that general preference for them, which once so dominantly prevailed in English society.

Madeira is one of those wines that bear age remarkably well, retaining its qualities unimpaired in both extremes of temperature, and constantly improving with the advance of time. Indeed, these wines can hardly be considered in condition before they have been eight or ten years in the wood, and afterwards allowed to mellow twice that time in bottle. Their flavour and aroma perfect themselves by keeping, and the wine has never yet been drunk too old. When of prime quality and carefully preserved, they lose all their original harshness, and acquire that agreeable pungency, that bitter sweetness so highly prized in the choicest wines of antiquity,—uniting great strength and richness of flavour with an exceedingly fragrant and diffusible aroma. The nutty taste, too, which is often very marked, is inherent in this wine.

The insular state of Madeira, and its favourable geographical position, did not save it from the general devastation caused by the *oïdium* blight, which made its appearance there a year earlier than on the Douro, and in a much more virulent form. The attack was not partial, as elsewhere, for in the second year of its sway (1852) it

destroyed the entire crop of grapes, and fatally infected the plant itself. The vines, with occasional exceptions, were everywhere uprooted, and the few that escaped have seldom produced healthy fruit since. For six years there was no vintage at all. The vine has been in a great measure replaced by the sugar-cane, which has once more become the staple produce, and the wine trade at present is nearly extinct.

The CANARIES, a group of islands seated on the west coast of Africa, have for ages been famed for a rich and fragrant wine of more than usual excellence, which is produced in considerable abundance, the exports amounting to 25,000 pipes annually. The aspect of all these islands is elevated and full of mountains, the sides of which display a profusion of vegetation, their volcanic origin admirably suiting them to the cultivation of the vine. In former days arbitrary variations and corruption of terms confused the nomenclature of its produce. As Canary wine it was once much drank in England, where it was known only by that name. The flavour is good, and it possesses ample body, ranking, without apparent cause, second only to Madeira,—possibly from careless or unskilful management of the vintage.

The AZORES, another island group in the same region, produce about five thousand pipes of wine. These are grown on the isle of Pico, but their quality never stood very high. Of the Canary varieties several approach the Madeira in quality, and the produce of Teneriffe often passes under that name. It is derived from the same species of grape and a similar soil; but although the temperature is higher and more steady, the Teneriffe wine never reaches the full body and rich flavour of the prime growths of

Madeira. Formerly a large quantity of sweet wines used to be manufactured here, but more recently the rising preference for the dry kinds has induced the growers to limit their attention almost solely to that class. The Malvasia is not so sweet or strong as Teneriffe, but when it is about three years old has the flavour of a rich and ripe pine-apple. It is a wine very difficult of preservation when exported, especially to cold climates, where it often turns sour.

For many years a great partiality seems to have ruled in this country for Canary wine, which, Howell states, "is accounted the richest, most firm, the best bodied, and lastingest wine, and the most defecated from all earthy grossness of any other whatever. French wines," he continues, "may be said to pickle meat in the stomach; but this is the wine that digests, and doth not only breed good blood, but it nutrifieth also, being a glutinous substantial liquor. Of this wine, if of any other, may be verified that merry induction,—that good wine maketh good blood, good blood causeth good humours, good humours cause good thoughts, good thoughts bring forth good works, good works carry a man to heaven: *ergo*, good wine carrieth a man to heaven." The importation of Canary wine, though formerly large, is now very inconsiderable.

§ 11. *The Wines of Italy and Greece.*

In all ages the vine has been esteemed as so beneficial to this life, that ardent admirers have never been wanting who believe that the happiness of the one consists in the enjoyment of the other.

"In vite homines, vitam esse diceres."—*Ovid.*

Yet they do not sufficiently reflect, perhaps, that if wine be "the cradle of life," it may, by excess, become "the grave of reason;" for if men will constantly sail in "the red sea of the Tuscan grape," their minds are often drowned, even whilst thinking themselves above the pale of mortality. Although too devoted an allegiance to the vine is thus pernicious, and from it often come more faults than grapes, yet what cherishes the heart of man so much as wine? What more delightfully refreshes the spirits and the mind, exhausted by toil and care, than that natural nectar,—that divine medicine, which abates our griefs, mitigates our sorrows, and inspires the countenance with happy and smiling cheerfulness?

"Tunc dolor et curæ, rugaque frontis abest."—*Ibid.*

Of modern Italy the vinous products are both numerous and of varied excellence; yet, notwithstanding the sterling advantages of a benignant clime and congenial soil, it has not succeeded in maintaining the signal distinction which its early fame might have induced us to expect; and it is but too frequently the case, that where Nature is most bountiful, man becomes remiss and unmindful of her gifts, and ceases to improve the benefits bestowed upon him according to his means and ability. In more northern

latitudes the utmost precaution and skill are employed to protect the vine from the injury of a low temperature and humidity; but in Italy, where it springs up almost spontaneously, and an early summer secures the full maturity of its fruit, but little labour and attention are necessary to produce an abundant vintage. Hence the vines that attach themselves to the fences or trees that bound his fields, commonly supply the needy vintager with a sufficient quantity of wine to satisfy his homely wants. That Italy does produce good wine is undeniable, and equally so that she grows a vast deal of what is very bad, nearly the whole of which are made solely to meet the requirements of the resident population. The peasant cultivators generally are not an idle race, but the stimulus and interests of commerce have not yet interfered to impel any active desire for improvement, whilst the vexatious and impolitic restrictions by which the internal traffic has hitherto been trammelled, compel the people to remain content with their own growths, however unsuitable the locality may be for the culture of the grape.

If appearance alone were consulted, the bald and stunted vines of Burgundy or Champagne must yield to the more exuberant growths of Italy, where they are allowed to send forth their foliage full and unbroken; and their branches, entwining round each other, and occasionally forming festoons from tree to tree, contribute to variegate and adorn the landscape. But, unhappily, the quality of the wine is almost always in the inverse ratio of such profuse expansion. In many other respects the management of the Italian vineyards is equally faulty: it often occurs that the vines are planted in the corn land, and corn is grown where the vines ought to be. The peasant-farmer,

having but little ground and still less capital, does not look beyond the quickest return, and that which comes most immediately within his slender means. In spite of all these errors of culture, the great superiority of climate would probably still ensure a high rank to the Italian wines, if more care and skill were exercised in their manufacture. But on this point the ignorance, the obstinacy, and the slovenly indolence of the natives are almost incredible. Although the varieties are numerous, and many of them of the first excellence, no pains are taken to separate the different species of grapes, either in the planting or the vintage; they are gathered indiscriminately, and often before they are ripe; no nicety or cleanliness is shown in conducting the fermentation, or in conveying the liquor to the cask;—in short, the juice is often irreparably spoiled before it has left the vat. In particular districts of Italy, however, it is by no means rare to meet with good wine, and in many instances both care and industry are applied to the vine. The oppression of a foreign yoke and of domestic exaction are chargeable with much of the prevalent evil; the Italians are sensibly alive to their recent abject condition, no less than to the advantages of industrial commerce, and would soon apply themselves to amend a faulty system, were they permitted to reap the reward due to intelligence and steady improvement. Their views, hitherto, have not expanded beyond the demand for home consumption; yet, of all the countries of Europe, Italy ought to be foremost in raising the choicest wines.

From this general censure on Italian vintages, those of Tuscany deserve to be excepted, where the culture is much better conducted than in any other Italian state. The luxuriant vines of her soil are nearly all of the high train-

ing, and considerable care is bestowed on the manufacture. The hill wines only are good, the growth of the plains being generally regarded as poor. Tuscany is ever considered the country of the vine in Italy, and so much has the notion been cherished by its people, that "*Corpo di Bacco!*" is the common oath of the lower classes.

Redi, too, a celebrated Italian poet, and court physician to the Grand-dukes of Tuscany in the seventeenth century, in his exquisite poem of *Bacco in Toscana*, depicts with graphic effect the fervent love of his countrymen for the product of the vine. This extravaganza is a free and lively outburst of animal joyousness, improvised, as it were, to an hilarious dancing measure in a true Bacchanalian spirit. As poetry invariably suffers by transmutation into any foreign tongue, it would be somewhat difficult to convey in an English dress a just conception of the sparkling vivacity these verses display,—a difficulty enhanced by the national objects and associations interwoven with the subject, no less than by the little cognizance of Tuscan wines prevalent in this country. As the poem, however, is regarded as one of the wittiest and most popular of Italian literary gems, the following detached passages may serve to awaken interest for a production awarded so large a share of local celebrity; nor, peradventure, will it lose favour in the estimation of the intelligent reader, should he be able to discern in these rollicking stanzas the model suggestive of the playful freedom displayed in the *Don Juan* of Lord Byron, or in the *Hyperion* of Longfellow, but constitute the best apology for this digression.

The poet, it may be premised, feigns that Bacchus, accompanied by Ariadne, in taking his divine circuits around the globe, comes and seats himself on the lawn

before the Grand-ducal mansion in the vicinity of Florence. He demands to know how the Tuscan wines go on. They are served up to him: he tastes, he criticises, and pronounces between the several varieties presented for his judgment. He drinks deeper, becomes elevated, and abandons himself to the joy and excitement appropriate to the occasion.

"Oh, boys! this Tuscan land divine
Hath such a natural gift of wine,
We'll fall, we'll fall
On the barrels and all;
We'll fall on the must, we'll fall on the presses,
We'll make the boards groan with our vivid caresses.
No measure, I say; no order,—but riot;
No waiting, no cheating; we'll drink like a Sciot.
Drink! drink! drink again when you've done;
Pledge it, and frisk it, till joy you have won.
Chirp it, and challenge it, swallow it down;
He that's afraid is a thief and a clown.
If Signor Bellini, besides his wild apes,
Would anatomize vines, and anatomize grapes,
He'd see that the heart that makes good wine,
Is born to do good, and very benign.

When I drink freely, I rise
Above the Mount of poets wise,
And in my voice, and in my song
Grow so sweet, and feel so strong,
I Phœbus challenge with his Delphic strains;
Songs will I sing yet more moving and fine
Than the bubbling and quaffing of Gersolé wine.
Then the rote shall go round, and the cymbals kiss,
And I'll praise Ariadne, my beauty, my bliss!

True son of the earth is Chianti wine,
Born on the ground of a gipsy vine;
Born on the ground for sturdy souls,
And not the lank race of your garden poles

Like a bold king
In his conquering,
Chianti wine with his red flag goes
Down to my heart, and down to my toes;
He makes no noise, and beats no drums,
Yet pain and trouble fly as he comes.
Still with a good bottle of Carmignan,
He, of the twain, is the merrier man;
He brings from heav'n such a fill of joy,
I envy not Jove his ambrosia, my boy.

Cups of chocolate, or fragrant tea
Are not compounds made for me;
Nor that bitter and dirty stuff, ye
Talk of so glibly, and term it coffee;
And for a beverage so dark and unseemly,
With the grand Turk I differ extremely.
For the dolt who drinks water, I wish to observe,
Gets nothing from me: he may swill and may starve.
Whether from well, or flowing from fountain,
Or whether it comes foaming white from the mountain,
I cannot admire it,
Nor ever desire it;
He's a fool or a madman, an impudent wretch,
Who could think ever to thrive in a noisome ditch.
Let the dark Moslem and fierce Mameluke
Praise Nile's fertile waters exempt from rebuke;
Let the proud Spaniard exult in his Tagus,
I will have neither, nor permit even negus.
Away with all water wherever I come,
I forbid it my people, both old and young;
Of lemonade water, of jessamine water,
Our tavern knows nothing;—water's a hum!
All your hydromels and flips
Come not near these cautious lips.

But a truce to such pretences!
Or I shall lose my senses.
Let me purify my mouth
In a cup of the rosy south;

In a golden pitcher let me
Deeply plunge and comfort get me,
And drink of the wine
Of the vine
So benign,
That sparkles warm in Sansovine.

Meanwhile let's renew our drinking;—
But with *what* fresh wine and glorious
Shall our beaded brims be winking,
For an echoing toast victorious?
You know Lamporecchio, the castle crown'd,
There's a topaz made there, pray send it round;
Serve, serve me a dozen,
But let it be frozen,—
Let it be frozen and finish'd with ice,
And see that the same be as virginly nice
As the coldest that whistles from wintry skies:
Coolers and cellarets, crystal with snows,
Should always hold bottles in ready repose.
Bring me heaps
Of all that sleeps
On every village hill and valley,
For weak is the brain, and I verily scout it,
That thinks in hot weather to drink without it.
Then bring me ice daily, and bring it me doubly,
Out of the grotto of Monte di Boboli:
With adze and pickaxes,
Hammers and rammers,
Thump it and hit it me,
Crack it and crash it me,
Hew it and split it me,
Pound it and smash it me,
Till the whole—(for I'm dead dry, I think!)
Turns cold enough to freshen my drink.

Good wine is always a gentleman,
He speedeth digestion all that he can;
No headache hath he, no heartburn I say,
For those who talk'd with him but yesterday.

Wine, wine! is your only drink!
Grief never dares to look at the brink.
And should any disciple of mine
Dare sullenly frown on his wine,
Or partake of a globule of water,
Here's the hand that will give him to slaughter;
For six times in a year to be mad with wine
I hold in no shame, but a very good sign.
For me, I daily indulge in my can,
To act solely the part of a gentleman;
And doing thus, I can boldly defy
Both hail and snow in a freezing sky.
I never go poking
Or croaking, when cloaking
And wrapping myself from head to foot,
As some people do,—hat and wig to boot.

Fill, then, fill! let us have our will!
But with what—with *what*, boys, shall we fill?
Fill me the manna of Monte Pulciano,—
Heav'ns! it glides to my heart by the sweetest of roads!
Oh! how it kisses me,—tickles me,—blandily bites me!
And now my eyes loosen all sweetly in tears!
Then hearken, all earth! and listen, ye drinkers!
All who reverence Bacchus and are noble thinkers!
Give ear, and have faith in this edict divine,
'*Monte Pulciano's the king of all wine!*'

At these inspiring sounds
The nymphs in mazy rounds,
Shaking their ivy diadems and grapes,
Echo the triumph in fantastic shapes.
The Satyrs would fain have join'd them; but, alas!
They couldn't; for they lay about the grass
As drunk as apes."

Bacchus is now fairly intoxicated, and then ensues a passage which, although much admired in Italy, it is scarcely possible to do justice to in English. The head of

the deity begins to turn: he thinks there is an earthquake, and calls out for a boat. His thickened speech becomes divided between Ariadne and the fancied boatmen. Cucurrucù (*sic in orig.*) is the burthen of a popular song, in which is imitated the voice and actions of a cock.

"Oh! what a sweet thing
'Tis for you and for me,
On an evening in spring,
To sail on the sea!
The little fresh airs spread lightsome their wings,
And flit o'er the blue surface in gay revellings;
To the tune of the waters, with tremulous glee,
They strike up a dance to people at sea.

Row, brothers, row!
We'll sail and we'll go;
We'll sail and we'll go till we settle in por—
Ariadne! in por—in port.
Pull away, pull away,
Without drag or delay,
No gallants grow tired, but think it a sport
To feather their oars till they settle in port—
In por—Ariadne! in port.
I'll give ye a toast,
And then, you know, you,—
Arianeeny! my beauty—my queeny—
Shall sing me a little, and play to me, too,
On the mandòla the coocurucoo!
The coocurucoo!
On the mandòla the coocurucoo!

Boaters never get tired, but think it a sport
To feather their oars till they settle in port—
In por—Ariadne! in port.
I'll give thee a toas—
Yes! I *will* give a toast, and then, you know, you
Shall give me one, too,
Arianeeny! my quainty—my queeny!

Sing me, you ro—
Sing me, you rogue! and play to me, do,
On the vio—viòla the coocurucoo!
The coocurucoo!
On the viòla the coocurucoo!"

In this favoured province all classes, without any excess, enjoy their wine freely, fancying it makes good blood. At a Tuscan villa the owner will with pride extol the vinous growths from his estate; and in Florence the nobles sell their wine by retail from their palace cellars. The phrase "flask of wine" is essentially Tuscan,—the wine being supplied to the consumer in bottles holding about three quarts, of the shape of the well-known oil vessels. When filled, a little oil is put into the neck, which effectually keeps the wine from the air: when it is to be poured out, a bit of tow is first inserted, which will absorb the oil from the surface of the wine. The vintages of Tuscany are mostly red. Formerly several white sorts were made, of which the Verdea, so called from its colour inclining to green, was in high repute. Frederic II. of Prussia preferred it to all other European wines; and in the time of our James I., to have drunk Verdea is mentioned as among the boasts of a travelled gentleman. The best came from Arcetri, in the vicinity of Florence.

From Verona to Vicenza, as well as in Lombardy, it is the custom to plant trees lozenge-fashion for the support of the vines. In the north, from Bassano to Trent, the valleys abound in vineyards, but the wine is too rich and luscious to be drunk by any but the inhabitants. In spots among the Apennines the vines are carefully dressed, terrace-fashion, and were they sufficiently pruned, and the fruit taken at due maturity, a vast deal of excellent wine might be produced. In Calabria the system of high

training prevails, yet so far from this mode being prejudicial to the quality of the fruit, they are obliged to shade the vines from the sun, lest in that volcanic region the grape should become too ripe, shrivel into a raisin, and be only fit for making wine of the thickest and sweetest kind.

Some of the best wines of Italy are found in the kingdom of NAPLES, especially the sweet wines that grow on the volcanic soils of Vesuvius, the principal among them being the celebrated Lacryma Christi, which is certainly entitled to rank with the first-class produce of any country. It is a red, luscious wine, better known by its name than from its use, as it is made only in small quantities, and chiefly reserved for the royal cellars. It is exceedingly rich, with an exquisite flavour, and is thought by some to be the Falernian wine of Horace; yet, from the poet's vivid description of a passing luxury, this can hardly be hoped for.

In SARDINIA the vine is so productive, that the fruit is frequently left upon the branches for lack of vessels to hold the juice. An amber-coloured wine called Nasco, and a red variety named Giro, are the most remarkable. There are also several sweet and ordinary wines, some of which are exported to Holland and Russia.

SICILY produces wine in much abundance, but the remarks on the bad husbandry and vintage of Italy apply here in full force. The same advantages for the growth, and the same imperfections of treatment, the same errors in fermentation, and the same ignorance, obstinacy, and inattention to cleanliness, attend the whole system. Nevertheless, many vintages maintain their ancient repute, of which the white wines are the more numerous, and by far the best. Within these few years the free trade carried on

between England and Sicily has brought us more acquainted with the growths of the hills at the foot of Mount Etna, which may be regarded as one vast vineyard, producing a great variety of wines, according to the different soils and aspects. The first wines of the province of Mascoli grow on Etna, being almost the only good red kind met with on the island. Augusta yields a variety possessing a strong flavour of violets. Over the mouldering remains of Syracuse a red muscadine is raised, equal, if not superior, to any other known. Messina furnishes a considerable quantity for exportation. Marsala, when not overcharged with impure brandy, is a useful and agreeable wine, something like Madeira of the second class, and of considerable body. A larger share of attention and traffic in Sicilian wines has arisen since the closer connexion of the island with this country. The soil is congenial, the climate propitious, and when the true interests of proprietors and traders are better comprehended, growths may be obtained that will furnish an acceptable variety for the table, and strengthen commercial intercourse. Hitherto the Sicilian merchants, either from mistaken notions of our taste in wine, or from their cupidity, have been induced to export a number of the inferior growths highly brandied, which no age will mellow or treatment subdue; consequently they have been looked upon with disfavour, having all the worst qualities of the worst Port and indifferent Madeira.

Italy, although regarded as especially "the land of the sun," did not escape the ravages of that European scourge the grape-blight. Commencing its career, in 1851, from the northern portion of Sardinia, it pursued its devastating course through the Lombard, Tuscan, and other wine-pro-

ducing districts, sparing not, and continued, without much abatement, its baneful progress through four successive years. The loss to proprietors was severe, and much distress and privation was occasioned to the people from their being so long deprived of the harvest that provided a wholesome and economical beverage, which custom and use had made for them one of the necessities of life. A curious fact was noticed as attendant on this visitation during the seasons of its greatest virulence, in the spontaneous production, in common ground, of an immense quantity of mushrooms, which regularly decreased as the intensity of the vine-distemper diminished.

Of the precise nature and taste appertaining to the wines of ancient GREECE the moderns are but imperfectly informed, and much in relation to their identity, quality, and flavour, inference and conjecture alone can now determine. That this refined and enlightened community preferred old wines to new, that they sometimes used them perfumed, that they mixed water with their wines, and that habitual drunkenness was considered infamous, we learn from the gifted authors whose works have been preserved to us through the darkness of ages; but the practical information conveyed by these writings carry us very little further. Possibly the manufacture of the vinous juice as conducted in Cyprus at the present time, resembles most nearly the general practice pursued by the antients, for the general character of dry or luscious wines, depending mainly on the soil or time of plucking the fruit, must have been similar in their day as now.

Throughout nearly the whole of Greece the soil is highly favourable to the vine, and serves to diversify extensively the character and quality of its produce. Hills of calca-

reous earth, with slopes of benign exposure, volcanic and gravelly soils, offer situations of rare occurrence for vineyards. Nothing, in short, is wanting to secure the purest and most delicious produce but a more consistent and skilful treatment of the vintage, and the abandonment of the deleterious mixtures which long-established prejudices have inveterately established. The grapes are mostly gathered indiscriminately, and the fermentation carelessly conducted; salt, baked gypsum, and lime are used to subdue the sweetness of the liquor, and a portion of resin is commonly introduced, as in ancient days, to imitate the piquant briskness of old wine. On the Grecian continent, although there is no want of the finest sites on the slopes of calcareous mountains, the poor peasants are induced, by the temptation of a larger produce and the saving of labour, to plant their vines on the lowlands, which are generally marshy in winter, and consequently very inimical to the finer qualities of the grape. The fruit is collected with little care, and is hurried through an imperfect or an excessive fermentation. In order to give such indifferent wine a little more body, a large addition is made of the resin of the pine-tree; but even with this assistance it will hardly keep till the following summer, and during the hot months the people seldom drink any thing better than vinegar; indeed until quite sour, it is always thick and muddy.

The vine is variously cultivated in different parts of Greece. On the mainland the plantations were formerly numerous, and the produce considerable. While under Venetian rule, Candia and Cyprus supplied the whole of Europe with the finest dessert wines; and so abundant was the vintage, that the former island alone is said to have exported not less than 200,000 casks of Malmseys annually.

Under Turkish sway the Greek population has gradually diminished, and during the war of emancipation whole vineyards were rooted up, and the most wanton devastation was committed by the Ottoman soldiery. The Morea, although the original country of the Malvasia or Malmsey grape, no longer affords any but wine of the worst quality.

Candia, to this day, yields a good deal of excellent wine. The principal manufacturers formerly were the monks. At the monastery of Arcadi fine and noble cellars are shown, where the produce of the vintage was formerly stored. The wine of that locality is a rich Malmsey. The Jews, also, make a tolerable muscadine; it is pleasanter to the palate than Tent, and is sold very cheap. The wine-bibbers of Candia were once so notorious, that a party of them would sit round a cask, and not rise until it was emptied. The wines of Rhodes are in much esteem, but they are nearly all of the sweet or luscious kind. One species of grape grown here is as large as a damascene plum, and very similar in colour. The sun in this island is sufficiently powerful to maintain the vines in bearing every month in the year, and if watered judiciously, both ripe and incipient fruit appear on the same plant at the same time.

In Cyprus the hills on which the vine is cultivated are covered with flinty stones and a blackish earth, interspersed with ochrous veins. The Commandery of the Templars and the knights of Malta once possessed many hamlets and vineyards near Paphos, and the produce is still called the wine of the Commandery. It is obtained from a berry of a red colour, and resembles in hue the Italian wine of Chianti. As soon as it is made, it is put into large cone-shaped vessels of baked clay, which are half buried

in the ground, their bases ending acutely, like amphoræ. The art of making these vessels is very ancient, even to the remotest ages. They hold from twelve to twenty barrels each, and are either simply coated with pitch, or painted internally, as they leave the potter's furnace, with a boiling liquid composed of turpentine and pitch, mixed with vine-ashes, goats' hair, and fine sand, which effectually closes the pores, and never falls off. After being left thus for a year, the wine changes from a red colour to a yellowish tint. It is afterwards stored in casks, and finally removed for sale in jars, each jar containing five Florence bottles, and warranted to keep good for the space of a year. The quantity of genuine wine of the Commandery is stated at ten thousand jars, although a much larger number was in former times sent out of the island under that name. About five thousand jars of muscadine are also made in Cyprus: the best at Agros. The sweetness of this wine is excessive; it is clearer than the Malmsey of most other countries, and at first is white, but acquires a red colour and increase of body from age. A kind of wine *liqueur* is exported from Cyprus, but little if any comes to the West. It is imitated and sold in the coffee-houses of Paris, under the name of *vin de Chypre*.

Most of the smaller Greek islands produce some variety of wine. Naxos, a fertile spot in the Ægean sea, was formerly notorious for the gross intemperance of the natives and its temple of Bacchus, the chief deity of the island. Santorini, also, is remarkable for the sulphurous taste accompanying its wine when new, and also for its *vino santo*. The latter is made from white grapes, previously exposed for seven or eight days on the roofs of the houses. It is a luscious wine, and a million of okes are said to be

exported in some years, principally to Russia. The wines of Lampsacus, Thasos, Chios, and Lesbos were in high repute among the antients, and all their coins display heads of Bacchus and Silenus, or else ivy-leaves, amphoræ, grapes, or panthers, as emblematic of their fruitful clime.

In the present, as in former times, the best Greek wines are of the luscious sweet class. Those made in Cyprus and Samos, the red muscadine of Tenedos, and the white of Smyrna, vie with the richest Hungarian wines, and have probably undergone little or no change since the days of Strabo and Pliny, who reckon them among the most estimable in the world. Scio still produces wine called Homer's nectar, as it did 2000 years ago: the white and black grapes are mingled to make this wine, which is in high esteem in the Archipelago. Cæsar gave away a hundred vessels of it on the occasion of his triumph. Another kind, called Nectar, until mellowed by age, strangers cannot relish: the grape is said to be styptic.

Selim II. conquered the island of Cyprus that he might be the master of its vinous treasures. At that time wines of eight years old were found that burned like oil. After sixty or seventy years, some of this wine becomes as thick as syrup. Several of the islands, however, as Ithaca, Cephalonia, Candia, and Cyprus yield abundance of dry red wines, which, with a little more care in the manufacture, might be rendered fit for general exportation. In some places the product is collected in skins smeared with tar, which impart a disagreeable flavour, and unsuits it for use until mellowed by long keeping; but the poverty of the farmers will seldom allow them to adopt proper means for preserving their wines. Some of the Cyprus wine is so tainted by the skins, that it cannot be drunk without the

addition of water, except under the penalty of a severe headache; and one product of Chios was said to be so potent, as almost instantly to render insensible the stranger who unwittingly indulged in the enticing draught.

The total quantity of wines raised on the main land of Greece in 1816, as computed by a recent well-informed traveller, amounted to 4,640,000 okes, and about £62,000 in value. Wine is usually sold in Greece by the oke, 45 of which make 127½ lb. avoirdupois.

In the southern provinces of RUSSIA the vine, of late years, has been cultivated with considerable success. At Astracan and in the Crimea there are about three hundred vineyards, yielding a red wine of good quality. Formerly the Crimean cultivators prepared thick wines, or rather syrups, as well as confections, from the produce of their vines, and distilled brandy from the refuse of the grapes; but this has now ceased, from the sale of wine proving more advantageous. The plantations of Astracan are much older, and the grapes, which were first introduced there from Persia by an ecclesiastic in the fourteenth century, have long been noted for their size and flavour. In the time of Peter the Great, Astracan grapes were conveyed to St. Petersburg for the royal table on account of their richness and beauty. They bear a high price in that city from the cost and care necessary in the carriage. Both red and white wines are produced in Astracan, where twenty different sorts of wine are said to be cultivated. They are protected from the extreme severity of the winter by a covering of earth or stubble. In the Caucasus it is sometimes customary to hang unripe poppy-heads in the cask during fermentation, by which means the intoxicating effect of the wine is much augmented. The wines grown

in Russia, however, bear no comparison to the quantity of ardent spirit consumed by its rude, serf-like population. About thirty millions of gallons of coarse brandy are every year distilled in that country, besides a variety of other liquors; yet, notwithstanding such a large native production, no less than a million of roubles have been paid, for years together, upon the import of wine into St. Petersburg alone.

The IONIAN ISLANDS, now in possession of England, yield good and serviceable wines, whenever care is exerted in the management of the vintage. The red wine of Corfu is distinguished by its lightness and delicacy: it produces, also, a cordial liqueur from dried raisins, called Rosolio. Cephalonia, besides the red wines common to the other islands, has a white muscadine peculiar to its own shores; and the Zante wines, both dry and sweet, are in much esteem. One of the latter, a *vin de liqueur*, made from the Corinth grape, is said to approach to the quality of Tokay. They have also a rich muscadine wine. All the varieties grown on the island are strong, and they make one kind which is taken as a cordial, notwithstanding water is added to the grapes after they are crushed.

§ 12. *The Wines of Persia and India.*

PERSIA is supposed to be the native seat of the vine, and this opinion derives some plausibility from the extraordinary perfection which its fruit attains in that country. The people have a tradition that wine was discovered through an accidental circumstance by their king Jemsheed. This monarch, having a passionate fondness for grapes, deposited a large quantity in a vessel of considerable size, which he stored in a cellar for future use. Some time afterwards it was found that the fruit had fermented; and being thought poisonous by the king, he directed it to be closed up, and marked accordingly. It so happened, that a lady of the harem, tired of life from *ennui* and the sufferings she endured from a chronic nervous head-ache, contrived to get access to the store, and drank some of the novel fluid; pleased unexpectedly with its soothing influence, she indulged freely, and, in plain truth, got drunk. She slept, awoke well, and afterwards luxuriated in so many deep potations, that she finished it to the last drop. The king, discovering what she had done, took the hint for his own behoof, and hence the origin of the veritable juice of the grape. Whether this story be founded on fact or is purely fabulous, the general assent of universal tradition ascribes the first source of the vine to Persia. The fruit in that country, certainly, attains a remarkable size, some of the berries forming a fair mouthful, and the provinces bordering on the southern end of the Caspian Sea have been always reputed for excellent wine. The Armenians, it is said, claim precedence, because Noah planted his vineyard near Erivan, upon the very spot where he and his family

resided before the Deluge; but the certainty or otherwise of this pretension must be left to learned theologians and curious casuists to divine.

A vast proportion of the Persian empire would disappoint the traveller who has heard of the supreme beauty of the country, and the luxuries which are there said to abound. The fertile spots, indeed, are equal to every thing narrated of them, but in proportion to its extent of surface they are not very numerous. It is chiefly along the line of mountains that stretch from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea that the best wine-districts are situated. The whole country round Shiraz is covered with the vine, and it is in Ferdistan, upon the lowest slope of the mountains near that town, that the largest grapes in Persia are grown; but the imperial grape of Tauris is most extolled for eating and the table, being thought more delicately luscious.

The best red wine is made from a grape named *damas*: it is said to possess much strength and richness, and to keep well for fourscore years, retaining all its virtues in the highest perfection. Twelve varieties of grape are grown near Shiraz, including a violet, a red, and even a black species,—as the *Samarcand* grape: a single bunch of some kinds will weigh as much as a dozen pounds. The wine of Shiraz is sold by weight, and is kept either in flasks or well-glazed earthern jars. The declining demand, and the obstacles opposed to the manufacture, have probably tended to impair the quality: the culture of the vine is now comparatively neglected, and only small quantities of the esteemed flavour are procurable. One of the wines of Shiraz is a *liqueur*, made remarkably sweet and rich, and full of strength and perfume. The red sort sent to Europe is like Bordeaux in appearance, and of a taste not always

agreeable to strangers. Teheran, Yezd, Shamaki, Gilan, and Ispahan are the principal wine-districts. Few Persian wines, however, are much known out of their several localities; most of them are indifferent, and even the wine of Shiraz no longer maintains the high celebrity which it enjoyed of old.

Notwithstanding the Mahomedan religion prohibits the use of wine to its followers, a great deal is secretly consumed by the adherents of that creed. But the Persians have always been less scrupulous observers of this precept of the Koran than other Mussulmans; they frequently indulge in wine, and generally to intemperance, as they can imagine no pleasure in its use, unless it produce the full delirium of intoxication. The Turks, when they imbibe the forbidden draught, laugh at Christians for mingling water with it; and yet if they spill but a single drop upon their own garments, however valuable they may be, they immediately throw them away as polluted. The Armenians at Chiulful were formerly great drunkards, though not profane or quarrelsome in their cups; on the contrary, they were doubly devout, and when very much intoxicated, poured forth incessant prayers to the Virgin and her Son. The Jews and Armenians prepare wine on purpose for the use of Mahomedans, by adding lime, hemp, and other ingredients, to increase its pungency and strength; for the wine that soonest intoxicates is accounted the best, and the lighter and more delicate kinds are little esteemed by the disciples of the Prophet.

Shah Abbas II., historians inform us, was much addicted to wine, and made his courtiers share in his revels, yet he did not on that account neglect state affairs. His cellars were abundantly stocked with the choicest vintages of

Georgia, Karamania, and Shiraz, preserved with great nicety in bottles of Venice crystal; and every six weeks he received from the first of these countries a supply of twenty chests, each of them containing ten bottles, and each bottle about three quarts. He had also, at different times, wines sent him from Spain, Germany, and France; but he drank chiefly those of Persia, deeming them preferable to all others. Solyman, his successor, loved wine to great excess, and being seldom quite sober, was exceedingly cruel in consequence. His son, Hussein Abbas, was so struck with the baneful effects of intemperance, probably from his father's evil example, that he forbad the use of it throughout his dominions; but his mother soon after feigning illness, her complaisant physicians declared that nothing but wine would save her life. Hussein, from motives of filial piety, immediately rescinded the distasteful interdict, and obliged his wily parent so far as to partake of some himself. Under the spell of its influence he rashly abjured his former prudent notions, and soon became, like his two royal predecessors, and with still more disastrous results, a confirmed slave to an inordinate love for the seductive charms of the juice of the grape. The red wine of Shiraz has been lauded in exaggerated strains by the verses of Hafiz; but it is to be feared that, like the Falernian of Horace, its praises were more due to poetic fancy than to supreme excellence.

In Arabia the vine is cultivated by Jews and Christians, and the believers in the Koran, as elsewhere, drink the forbidden juice in secret, perhaps the more coveted from being denounced by their religion. Syria produces red and white wines of a similar quality to Bordeaux. At Damascus the "wine of Tyre" of the Scriptures, called by Ezekiel "wine

of Helbon," is yet made: it is a sweet kind. On Mount Libanus good wines are grown, but they are mostly *vins cuits*. A variety called *vino de oro*, described as a dry wine, is in much esteem there. The Maronites and natives drink freely of their wine, and are said to be remarkably convivial. Some of the wine is exceedingly delicate and pleasant to the taste. The grapes there are as large as plums, and are thought to be of the class seen by the Israelites when approaching the Land of Promise. At Jerusalem white wines are made, but they are poor in quality.

The territory of INDIA was the fabled birth-place of Bacchus, and Suradévi is the name bestowed on the Hindoo goddess of wine. That country at present produces little or no wine, except in the northern region between the Sutlej and the Indus: indeed to the southward the climate is too hot and the soil too rich for vine culture. The Indians, according to Diodorus, say that Bacchus first taught them the art of pressing grapes and making wine; that he resided in his capital of Nysa, in the modern Punjaub, that he ruled India with justice, and was, after his death, adored as a god. This however, fabulous or not, relates to the territory west of the Sutlej, or, as it was anciently termed, the Hyphasis river, beyond which the arms of Alexander never penetrated; nor does it appear that the antients ever acquired any knowledge of the countries beyond the limits of their conquests. Wine of good quality is now made at Lahore, beyond the Sutlej; and all the way from thence to Candahar, and northwards to Cashmere, vines are grown and wine manufactured. That of the latter region resembles Madeira. At Candahar, as in other Mahomedan countries, the use of wine is forbidden to the Faithful; but that drunkenness, nevertheless, does some-

times happen, is clear from the penalties attached to that offence. The transgressor is seated on an ass, with his face towards the tail, and so paraded through the streets, surrounded by a crowd of hooting and clamorous vagabonds. There can be no doubt that the vine would flourish well on the table-lands and mountains of India,—as on the Neilgherry hills, where the temperature and soil are all that can be desired for that purpose.

The CHINESE are said to make a small quantity of grape wine, though they prefer the produce of the still drawn from animal substance, as in their 'spirit of lamb's flesh,' mashed with milk or rice, said to be very potent and disagreeable. They have also a rice-wine, called Sam-Zou, and wine from the palm, in considerable quantities. Grape-wine is mentioned in the annals of China long before the birth of our Saviour, and was always esteemed by that people as the "wine of honour." The Chinese believe that in the reign of the Emperor Yu, twenty-two centuries before Christ, wine was invented by an agriculturist named I-tye. The government of that time, however, interposed with heavy prohibitory duties, not for the mercenary object of filling their coffers, but lest the people should grow effeminate by indulgence in so seductive a beverage. This philanthropic effort of legislation was vain: those who had tasted could not refrain from tasting again, even to excess; and it came to pass, their annals say, that a northern prince, named Kya, about fifteen hundred years before the Christian era, in one of his mad freaks filled a lake with it, and made three thousand of his people jump in, to participate in the joyous revel. Since that time Imperial mandates have from time to time been issued for rooting up the vines, until the grape became well nigh forgotten.

In many of the Islands of the Indian Ocean the plant luxuriates in great bounty, but the juice of its grape is too luscious for making into wine. In Java the wine bears ripe fruit three times in the year. The grape is also grown at Siam, but chiefly for raisins to distil into brandy.

In our AUSTRALIAN possessions, the vine has been successfully introduced. At New South Wales wine is made in considerable quantity, and said to be of very fair quality. The climate is well suited to the growth of the grape, and its culture and manufacture, in the hands of an active and enterprising people, may be hereafter destined to exercise considerable results. Of the character of the wine made in Sydney it is yet too early to judge; but that durability is one of its virtues is evidenced by the fact that a quantity, shipped without any admixture of spirit, after a voyage to Europe and back, was found on its arrival in Australia to be perfectly sound.

§ 13. *The Wines of Columbia.*

If any thing were needed to prove the universality of the gift of the vine to man, its presence on the discovery of the New World will amply testify to the unrestricted bounty of the supreme Giver. Although it has hitherto attracted little attention or celebrity, wine is produced in much abundance, both on the north and south continent, from indigenous as well as transplanted varieties. The wild vines on the Ohio attain a prodigious size, the trunks of some of them being from seven to ten inches in diameter, with luxuriant branches pendant some sixty or seventy feet from the tops of the tallest forest trees. Towards the end of the last century, some Swiss settlers cultivated the vine in the states of Ohio and Indiana with considerable address. The crop in 1811 furnished 2700 gallons from a vineyard only planted in 1805, and is said to have resembled Bordeaux in quality. About the same period, enterprising efforts were made to establish vine-culture on a still larger scale on the river Kentucky, but the experiment being unattended with commensurate success, it was for a time abandoned as hopeless. The cause of the failure has not been fully determined, but it is perhaps justly ascribed to undue moisture, occasioned by the excessive rain-falls that periodically occur between the months of April and October. In the year 1826, the *catawba*, a native American grape, was brought into notice, which was raised in a garden at Georgetown, near Washington. This fertile variety has gradually supplanted all others, and for wine purposes is almost universally adopted throughout the United States. It gives a very peculiar musky flavour to the wine, dis-

pleasing indeed to many when first tasted; but the dislike is quickly subdued by habit, and the wine is much relished in Missouri, where it sells readily at prices that would be deemed exorbitant in the wine-countries of Europe. Numerous other wild species are known in the States, and some of them may one day rival the Catawba, which at present is almost the only grape cultivated on a large scale for wine. The banks of the Ohio are now studded with vineyards, between 1500 and 2000 acres being planted in the immediate vicinity of Cincinnati, with every probability of a progressive increase. In Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Indiana, Tenessee, Arkansas, and in full two-thirds of the states of the Union, vineries of more or less promise and extent have been formed, leaving little room for doubt that the culture of the vine in the United States will extend and improve rapidly, and that at no very distant period wine will be produced there as cheaply and abundantly as in Europe.

In various parts of Mexico, also, good second-class wines are obtained, and California, where the vine flourishes in great perfection, has numerous plantations, which supply an agreeable red wine. The island of Cuba rears an abundance of wild grapes, which have an acrid taste, but afford a light, cool, sharp wine. The trunks of the vines are there often as thick as a man's body, and with their branches intertwined, extend in thick woods over leagues of surface. Wine long ago was made in Louisiana, and in the French colonies of America. In Florida, also, according to the testimony of Sir John Hawkins, a considerable quantity, of an agreeable taste, was produced from a native grape as far back as the year 1564; and Laudonnière says, in recounting his voyage to Florida in 1562, that the

"trees were environed about with vines bearing grapes, so that the number would suffice to make the place habitable." "Master Ralph Lane," the head of the first colony established in Virginia, wrote in 1585, that he had found in that country "grapes of suche greatnesse, yet wilde, as France, Spaine, nor Italie have no greater,"—though this, perhaps, savours of a little exaggeration. Large quantities of sparkling wine are made both at Cincinnati and St. Louis in imitation of Champagne, and, under the name of "sparkling Catawba," sells readily at four shillings the bottle. It is made by exactly the same complicated process, and with as much care, as in France, which will serve to account for the high price. The Catawba somewhat resembles Rhenish wine in appearance, and is of the same light straw colour; but it has the peculiar musky flavour above adverted to, and more body. The best quality is retailed at 2*s*. 6*d*. sterling the bottle.

South America abounds in vineyards. Wine formerly was made in Paraguay, but it was forbidden to be manufactured in the Brazils during the sovereignty of Portugal in that colony. Vines are grown at numerous places between Buenos Ayres and Mendoza: they are remarkably productive, and bear fine fruit wherever the owners take the necessary trouble with the cultivation. The clusters of grapes are remarkably fine and rich, and are interwoven with the pear, apple, and peach in the most luxuriant manner,—all in great perfection. An excellent second-class wine is made at Mendoza, at the foot of the Andes, on their eastern side, which is an article of considerable traffic with Buenos Ayres, a thousand miles distant across the Pampas. They are transported even during the summer heats, and so far from spoiling, they prove all the better

for carriage. The wine is not carried in skins, which so taint and disqualify the produce of some districts in the mother country, but is conveyed in small barrels slung on each side of a mule, and the quantity thus sent is considerable. Sweet wine, resembling Malaga, is also made there, for which they suspend the grapes for some time in bunches to mature after they are gathered. On approaching Mendoza, fields of vineyards and clover greet the eye on every side, and the gardens of the city are filled with some of the best muscatel grapes in the world, both as to size and quality. Several species of grape are cultivated, including a black variety, as well as the red and white: the vines are not permitted to exceed four feet in height, and the grounds are freely irrigated. Their wines of the first quality include both red and white sorts, and are held in much esteem, the latter bearing in the United States the price of Madeira.

Peru affords delicious grapes of various kinds in the vicinity of Lima, but no wine is made near that city, from the great demand for table use. The vines of Chili produce better fruit for wine than Peru, but the consumption being small, the vine-grounds are much neglected. The red grape is the most cultivated, and is remarkable for richness and fragrance, the muscatel far exceeding that of Spain, as well in the fruit as the wine it yields. The vines are trained *en espalier*. Nothing can equal the beauty of some of the clusters of the Chilian grape. A bunch has been gathered so large as of itself to fill a basket, and the trunks of some of the pollard vines attain an immense size. The wines made both in Peru and Chili are in colour white, red, and purple. Those of Chili are the most approved: the produce of Pisco sells best, and is highly esteemed.

The olive flourishes here in extreme profusion, and yields finer oil than most other countries.

The principal diseases to which the vine is subject in America are rot and mildew. The former is very destructive, especially to the Catawba. It usually appears at the latter end of June, after continued heavy rain followed by a hot sweltering sun; it strikes suddenly with fatal effect, destroying at times two-thirds of the crop in a few hours. No remedy yet tried has proved successful, and opinions differ widely as to the true nature of the blight,—some maintaining that it is merely a variety of the European *oïdium*. That it is caused by a description of fungus, which adheres to and gradually destroys the berry, is not denied; but whether it is a distinct and wholly American malady, has given rise to a great deal of undecisive controversy. Its ravages in 1858 were very calamitous, as much as two-thirds, and in some instances three-fourths of the crop having been destroyed by the mildew; but there is not any reason to apprehend that the disease will assume a permanent or abiding character.

§ 14. *On the Choice and Preservation of Wine.*

THE exercise of a sound judgment in the choice of wines is no easy task, especially to those unfamiliar with the nice shades of distinction, or unused to extensive and frequent opportunities of comparison. The difficulty may be stated as twofold: in the first place, no two persons entertain precisely similar notions as to the character of any particular vintage; and, secondly, the wines of the same estate will vary with the fluctuations of inconstant seasons. Age, care in storing, or mere accident, may cause a change in the flavour or bouquet of any particular description of wine sufficient to be clearly perceptible to a connoisseur, though little noticeable by persons unaccustomed to the variety. A purchaser should always, if possible, decide for himself, and select the wine that is most agreeable to his palate. The taste is the true criterion by which a safe opinion can be formed; yet a correct and unvarying palate is a rare gift. Experience will best implant on the memory what ought to be the peculiar characteristics of the first growths, and lead the judgment to a correct and satisfactory preference. The particular impression of the moment, however, is so liable to be affected by the passing state of the bodily health, or by the last substance taken into the mouth, that it is difficult to preserve it unimpaired. Sweet or spiced food taken some time previously will materially disturb the faculty of discrimination. Many resort to cheese, but after that convenient provocative, all wines will carry an agreeable relish; whilst such as are in the habit of taking strong wines or spirits lose much of that quickness and nicety of perception indispensable in

recognising the superior product of the purest growths. Constant familiarity with the choice and delicate kinds will alone confer the power of discerning minuter differences in aroma, bouquet, and characteristic flavour.

On convivial occasions a pretentious claim is often put forward by conceited amateurs, and with more vapour than modesty, to superior knowledge and discrimination respecting the character and properties essential to good wine,—and it still more frequently happens, that the worst judge is the first to complain of what is placed before him. At one moment, too, the example or eccentricity of a leading person of *ton* will occasion a wine previously in very little estimation, and perhaps worthless in reality, to become the leading wine of the table for a season. In England, especially, it is this fashion, or accident, and not a true appreciation of vinous excellence, that often makes the demand considerable for any particular sort. Although there is no positive standard of taste in wines, and popular notions are liable to much fluctuation, there are properties essential to good wine, with respect to which most persons will agree. Some like the sweet, others the dry wines; some the light, others the stronger kinds; but no purchaser will choose a flat and insipid vintage in preference to another distinguished by fulness of body and richness of flavour, or overlook the equally indispensable requisites of firmness and durability. Superior vintages, however, are of rarer occurrence than is usually imagined, and whatever may be the caution exercised, a supply cannot always be had in as perfect a state as may be wished for.

The first object to be sought for in the selection of wine, next to the spontaneous approval of the purchaser, is its purity. Whatever the region that produces it,—whatever

the class, if it be adulterated with any thing foreign to its natural growth, it ought to be rejected. To distinguish genuine wine from that which is mixed, also requires much experience, particularly when of a second or third-rate sort. The bouquet may be imitated, and even the taste simulated to persons not habituated by long practice to a nice and sensitive palate. It is needful, likewise, to consider whether, if new wines, they will keep or depreciate, and to what variations the flavour may be liable. Without these and similar qualifications, much disappointment and loss may ensue. Wines good and bright when tasted, might not retain their distinctive qualities a year; whilst others, that at first seem by no means promising, may prove in the end excellent. The characteristic aroma of the finest and best wines cannot be imparted at will, because their delicacy cannot be counterfeited. A particular flavour may be communicated by artificial means, but this will not deceive the palate well acquainted with what is genuine, and no imitative mixture will mislead the acumen and judgment of those accustomed to the taste of the pure growths. Wines that are blended lose the fragrance and unity that characterize their purer state. Wine that is pricked, or has a flat, dead taste, indicates that the external air has obtained access,—by the cork if in bottle, by a loose or imperfect bung if in cask.

Wines differ considerably in their power of endurance, and the time requisite for their fullest developement. Some will keep well for a very lengthened period, but any excess of age is always at the expense of some of their vinous properties. Mere age is no criterion for wine in its highest excellence, though a certain time is necessary to carry it to the state when it is best for the table. Wines

lose their fragrance when kept too long. There is always an eligible middle term, equally removed from the extremes of maturity and decay, in which the finer kinds should be drank. As a general rule, harsh wines, as Rhine and Moselle, have most bouquet; and spirituous wines, as Port and Sherry, are apt to undergo in time a considerable change in colour and flavour. Effervescing wines usually retain their quality only to a limited period, from the excess of inherent carbonic acid; most French wines are also affected by time, and lose much of their primitive character. Clarets are thought to drink best about ten years old. For Spanish wines a good age is needed, to bring out their proper flavour, reduce their ardency, and secure that rich mellowness so grateful to the palate. In all good wine tartar precipitates itself in the form of small crystals: it communicates no bad taste, nor renders it cloudy, but rather helps to sustain it in good condition.

But little advantage will attend the possession of the best wine, if due care be not taken to bring and preserve it to that maturity and perfection which it can alone derive from time. Wine of strength, intended to mellow in the wood, should be put into the largest casks that can be conveniently procured, for most wines ripen best in a large body. Delicate and light kinds should be bottled as soon as they attain a suitable condition, for this class gains little by continuing long in the wood. Strong-bodied wines require to be kept in bottle, in which state they best attain perfection. The preservation and amelioration of wine in bottle mainly depend upon the maturity it has acquired in the wood, and its freedom from all mucilaginous impurities. With the stronger vintages the longer it is retained in bulk, the better it gets. On the first fermentation the primary

constituents are partially decomposed, and converted into alcohol; it is only during the second or insensible fermentation that new combinations yield sufficient firmness to resist further decomposition and decay. All wines may thus be regarded as bearing within themselves the germs of degeneration, whilst, with equal truth, it might be affirmed that they are endued with the principles of improvement and endurance. Wines not bottled in proper time to preserve them when fully ripe, deteriorate in quality, and soon become unfit for use. Although wines when bottled are seemingly cut off from all external influences, they are still subject to subsidence or decomposition,—whether by the dispersion of their alcohol or other leading constituent, it is not easy to determine. Under this supplementary kind of fermentation the richer wines improve, and do not evince the same tendency to acescency as the thinner sorts. The precipitation of wine in bottle is only a continuance of that which commenced in the cask, and those which deposit most freely are observed to be the most durable. In their final stage of preservation all wines form some deposit, varying from coarse crust to an almost invisible sediment. Bottled wines, also, even when corked in the most careful manner, are subject to the action of external causes, and every precaution should be taken to prevent the access of air by means of the cork; if sealed, include the glass in the coating of wax. When laid down, they should be placed in a perfectly horizontal position, so that the liquid may always be in contact with the cork.

In the nature of the finer class of wines there is something exceedingly sensitive. Thunder, the rolling of heavy bodies over the cellar, and some things scarcely credible, are found to occasion the renewal of fermentation. The

wines of Portugal, however, are so hardy, that even the vaults under the streets of the metropolis will scarcely affect their quality; but the wines of Bordeaux, Champagne, and the Rhone should be placed in store where no motion or vibration of the ground can affect them. They should be removed as far from sewers, and the air of courts where noxious trades are carried on, as possible. These, in wet weather, would be sure to influence the wine, and promote a tendency to acetous fermentation. Deep cellarage is best for the wines of France; the produce of the south ripen better in warmer situations. Cold or hot weather is equally prejudicial to the removal of most wines. At all times keep the cellar dry and clean, with an equal temperature throughout the year.

Chemical analyses have been made from time to time, with a view to determine the relative proportions of the alcoholic strength of various wines and liquors; but from the variations occasioned by inequality of the seasons, the condition of the fruit, and other causes, they must be regarded as an approximation only, as they differ in many points from each other. According to one experiment,—

A bottle of Port, of 26 oz., seven years in bottle, gave 2 oz. 7 drachms of pure alcohol.

Ditto 25½ oz. one year in glass and two in wood, 2 oz. 6 dr.

Ditto of pale Sherry, 25 oz. and three years old, produced 3 oz.

Ditto Madeira, 25½ oz. two years old, 2 oz. 5 dr.

Ditto South African, 25 oz. one year old, 2½ oz.

Ditto old Hock, 21 oz. yielded nearly 1 oz.

Ditto Brandy, 24 oz. produced 10 oz.

Ditto Rum, 24½ oz. gave 9½ oz.

Four bottles of Port, Sherry, or Madeira contain somewhat more spirit than a bottle of Brandy.

Three bottles of Sherry are about equal to a bottle of Rum.

Ten bottles of Hock are about equal to one of Brandy.

Port wine contains in the residuum an acidulous extract, and more tartaric acid than Madeira, and Sherry less than either. The preference given to Port, on account of its astringency, is objectionable from its tartaric acid promoting indigestion and irritability of the viscera. Sherry appears better fermented, and for that reason freer from acrid or saccharine matter, and consequently is preferable where a tendency to such irritability is observable.

In decantering for use, be particularly mindful of the importance of a steady hand; for however good wine may be in itself, it is always better for coming to table perfectly bright. As some kind of deposit is invariably found in the bottle, it should not be drawn closer than one glass; this natural subsidence, however, must not be taken as a sign of inferiority or impurity, nor need the small surplus be regarded as waste, as it may be reserved for some other suitable purpose.

Having now well-nigh drained our fountain to the lees, this slight and imperfect labour cannot, perhaps, be concluded more appropriately than by echoing the recorded opinion of the learned and illustrious Professor von Liebig, who writes, "Alcohol stands high as a respiratory material. Its use enables us to dispense with the starch and sugar in our food, and is irreconcileable with that of fat. Spirits, by their action on the nerves, enable a man to make up the passing deficient power at the expense of his body. Wine as a restorative,—as a means of refreshment where the powers of life are exhausted,—of giving animation and energy where man has to struggle with days of trial and sorrow,—as a means of correction and compensation where misproportion occurs in nutrition,—and as a protec-

tion against transient organic disturbance, wine is surpassed by no product of nature or of art." We have further seen, that the use of wine as a beverage dates from the remotest antiquity, and has resolved itself into a primary necessity of life. Bread and wine, indeed, have been associated together even from the creation of the world. Medicine and science have rendered homage to the beneficent properties of the juice of the grape, which is now not only recognised and administered undiluted as a restorative for the convalescent, and a safe stimulant and reviver for the sick, but dispensed as a positive specific in some diseases; whilst its harmlessness generally, when not indulged in to excess, is undeniable. In France, besides being employed as a medium for administering delicate medicaments, such as opium, iodine, quinine, confections, &c., red wine is often prescribed by medical practitioners as an efficacious remedy for wounds, ulcers, and other external ailments.

"Oh! for a vintage full of the warm south,—
Full of the true, the blushing Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking on the brim
And purple-stain'd mouth,—
That I might drink."

Keats.